produce business

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

THE 26TH ANNUAL MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORT

EXCLUSIVE

INSERT

INSIDE:

The Pundit Looks At Sustainability vs. Charity
Wholesale Customer Service • Salad Blends
Southern Retailing • Protected Agriculture Part II • Transportation
Packaging • Avocados • Berries
Sweet Potatoes • Dried Fruits And Nuts
CPMA BOOTH REVIEW

MAR. 2013 • WWW.PRODUCEBUSINESS.COM • VOL. 29 • NO.03 • $9.90

Dole®

Nothing Else Stacks Up to DOLE® Berries

Dole isn't just one of the largest providers of fresh fruits and vegetables. We're also a major national berry distributor, and your one source for the freshest strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and raspberries.

To add our berries to your business, contact your sales rep or call 831-641-4364

Dole offers delicious berry recipes and tips. Visit berries.dole.com for more information.

©2013 DOLE is a registered trademark of Dole Food Company, Inc.

producebusiness
MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT
MARCH 2013 • VOL. 29 • NO. 03 • $9.90

p. 40

p. 127

COVER STORY

19 **THE 26TH ANNUAL MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORT**
Can produce staffers be trusted with consumers' health and wellness?

COMMENTARY

8 **THE FRUITS OF THOUGHT**
Guest-Worker Program At Heart Of Immigration Reform

146 **RETAIL PERSPECTIVE**
The Need For Real Execution

148 **EUROPEAN MARKET**
Moving The European School Fruit Scheme Into The Future

IN THIS ISSUE

4 **THE QUIZ**

6 **WASHINGTON GRAPEVINE**

10 **RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES**

11 **COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS**

13 **PRODUCE WATCH**

16 **TRADE SHOW CALENDAR**

149 **INFORMATION SHOWCASE**

150 **BLAST FROM THE PAST**

INSERT

FLORAL BUSINESS MAGAZINE

- **Shades of Great**
- **Floral Purchasing Across The Generations**
- **Floral Findings**

FEATURES

29 **WHOLESALERS 'UP' THEIR CUSTOMER SERVICES TO KEEP THINGS MOVING**
Beyond day-to-day buying and selling and what this means to profitability for everyone in the supply chain, the wider economy is creating ripple effects that have led to challenges and opportunities for produce wholesalers.

38 **NEW SALAD BLENDS OFFER SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE**
Creative lettuce blends expand the category, offering more than just salads to hungry, health-conscious consumers and restaurant diners.

40 **A ROUNDUP OF SOUTHERN RETAILERS**
More changes coming to southern retailing.

44 **OPEN-AND-CLOSED CASE: GREENHOUSE STANDARD DEBATE CONTINUES**
Supermarket produce executives, industry experts and government overseers shed light on buying strategies and bottom line issues surrounding protected agriculture versus traditional greenhouse.

50 **TOP TRUCKING INDUSTRY CONCERNS**
Intrusive government rules and regulations top the list of complaints.

55 **IT'S A BRAVE NEW WORLD: HOW TECHNOLOGY IS AFFECTING THE PRODUCE SUPPLY CHAIN**
Today's fast pace leads to fresher, more healthful fruits and vegetables for the consumer and better margins and profitability for the retailer.

DEPARTMENTS

MERCHANDISING REVIEW

127 ***10 Ways To Turn Your Avocado Sales Green***
Commodity boards, cross-merchandising and customer choice are just a few things to consider when merchandising avocados.

134 ***Berries Bag Profits For Produce Departments***
With year-round availability of many of the berry favorites, retailers have to work harder than ever to keep them front-and-center in consumers' minds.

138 ***Sweet Potatoes: 10 Tips For A Mature Product Making New Waves***
Creating well-conceived displays in prominent places, and paying close attention to freshness is just the beginning.

DRIED FRUIT AND NUTS

142 ***Dried Fruits And Nuts — The Athlete's Choice***
Peanuts and baseball have been a great team for decades, but a range of dried fruits and nuts are steadily increasing as the snack of choice among health-conscious sports enthusiasts.

p. 59

SPECIAL FEATURES

12 **CPMA BOOTH REVIEW**

18 **FROM THE PAGES OF *THE PERISHABLE PUNDIT***
Costco, Sheri Flies, The James Beard Foundation Leadership Award And How Sustainability Differs From Charity

59 **MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING**

Change Service requested: POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PRODUCE BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425.
PRODUCE BUSINESS (ISSN 0886-5663) is published monthly for $58.40 per year by Phoenix Media Network, Inc., P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425.

PRODUCE QUIZ

THIS MONTH'S WINNER

Tim Vaux
President
The Vaux Group
Fresno, CA

Tim Vaux started his business, The Vaux Group, in Fresno, CA, 10 years ago. "We're a one-stop-shop for produce consulting," he says. As president of the company, Vaux and his group provide produce industry consulting for the fresh produce industry. "I'm also a member of FreshXperts," he adds. "If I can't do a particular job, I have partners at FreshXperts that I can call on to help satisfy our customers' needs."

Before starting his own company, Vaux worked for 30 years at DuPont Company as the marketing director. It was through DuPont that Vaux got his start in the produce industry. "I guess my claim to fame is participating in United Fresh's Produce Industry Leadership Program through DuPont," he laughs.

Since then, Vaux has used the skills he learned at DuPont in his company. But even changing companies has not stopped Vaux from reading PRODUCE BUSINESS for 20 years. "I enjoy it all," he says, "especially reading about new concepts. I'm an entrepreneur at heart so I like to see new ideas in the industry."

How To Win! To win the PRODUCE BUSINESS Quiz, the first thing you have to do is enter. The rules are simple: Read through the articles and advertisements in this issue to find the answers. Fill in the blanks corresponding to the questions below, and either cut along the dotted line or photocopy the page, and send your answers along with a business card or company letterhead to the address listed on the coupon. The winner will be chosen by drawing from the responses received before the publication of our May issue of PRODUCE BUSINESS. The winner must agree to submit a color photo to be published in that issue.

WIN A DISTANCE-CALCULATING TALKING GOLF CADDY

This palm-sized GPS verbally informs golfers how far they are from the green to help them improve club and shot selections. With a preloaded database of 35,000 courses, the device automatically recognizes the golf course and exact hole from which you are playing. With the touch of a button, the device clearly announces the remaining distance to the front, back or center of the green.

QUESTIONS FOR THE MARCH ISSUE

1) How many schools does United Fresh hope to donate saald bars to by May, 2013?_____

_____

2) Which chef uses Little Gems Sweet Lettuce at RN74 in San Francisco, CA? _____

_____

3) Name three types of dried fruit that Great Lakes International Trading, Inc. offers in its line.

_____

4) How many commodities does Ocean Mist Farms offer? _____

_____

5) What is the contact number for Chelan Fresh? _____

_____

6) How many acres of farmland does Booth Ranches own? _____

_____

This issue was: ❑ Personally addressed to me ❑ Addressed to someone else

Name _____ Position _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Photocopies of this form are acceptable. Please send answers to:
MARCH QUIZ PRODUCE BUSINESS • P.O. Box 810425 • Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425

producebusiness
MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

MARCH 2013 • VOL. 29 • NO. 03 • $9.90

P.O. Box 810425 • Boca Raton • FL 33481-0425
Phone: 561-994-1118 • Fax: 561-994-1610
producebusiness@phoenixmedianet.com

PRESIDENT & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
James E. Prevor
JPrevor@phoenixmedianet.com

PUBLISHER/EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Ken Whitacre
KWhitacre@phoenixmedianet.com

SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR
Mira Slott
MSlott@phoenixmedianet.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Jennifer Leslie Kramer
JKramer@phoenixmedianet.com

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
Fran Gruskin
FGruskin@phoenixmedianet.com

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
Diana Levine
DLevine@phoenixmedianet.com

PRODUCTION LEADER
Jackie Tucker

PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT
SUNSHINE GORMAN
FREDDY PULIDO

TRADE SHOW COORDINATOR
Jackie LoMonte
JLoMonte@phoenixmedianet.com

EDITORIAL INTERN
Madeline Mesa
Mmesa@phoenixmedianet.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Meredith Auerbach, Carol Bareuther, Bob Johnson, Bill Martin, Kim Morgan, Jodean Robbins, Barbara Robison, Amy Sawelson

ADVERTISING
Eric Nieman, Associate Publisher
ENieman@phoenixmedianet.com

Wendy Jones
WJones@phoenixmedianet.com

Sandy Lee
SLee@phoenixmedianet.com

Bill Martin
Martinmedia45@peoplepc.com

Ellen Rosenthal
ERosenthal@phoenixmedianet.com

FLORAL DEPARTMENT MARKETING
E. Shaunn Alderman
SAlderman@phoenixmedianet.com

Send insertion orders, payments, press releases, photos, letters to the editor, etc., to
PRODUCE BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810425
Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425
PH: 561.994.1118 FAX: 561.994.1610

PRODUCE BUSINESS is published by Phoenix Media Network, Inc. James E. Prevor, Chairman of the Board
P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425.

Entire contents © Copyright 2013
Phoenix Media Network, Inc. All rights reserved.

Printed in the U.S.A.
Publication Agreement No. 40047928

american business media

In Memoriam

Kevin Murphy

April 20, 1954 - January 31, 2013

CEO / Owner of Baldor

"A true visionary with a life philosophy of hard work and caring for people that was felt by all whom he touched"

Kevin S. Murphy, 58, passed away on January 31, 2013 at the New York Presbyterian Hospital in Manhattan.

Kevin is survived by his mother Marilyn Murphy, brothers: Thomas D. Murphy Jr., Patrick Murphy, sister: Sharon Triolo and his son TJ Murphy and daughter-in-law Christine Murphy. He was born on April 20, 1954 in Wayne, NJ to Marilyn and Thomas D. Murphy. He attended Wayne High School and worked as a printer for Drum Litho after graduating.

Kevin's food career started at Balducci's in Greenwich Village in the 1980's when he married Ria Balducci, daughter of owner Andrew Balducci. He was trained in every department, learning the food business from the ground up. He expanded and finally took over Balducci's small wholesale division called "Baldor" in 1991. He moved his new company to a tiny warehouse in Long Island City, Queens and ran the operation with one van and a couple of delivery trucks. Baldor grew incrementally from there. The next move was to a larger facility in Maspeth, Queens where more staff and trucks were added.

In 2000, he took over a large facility on Barry Street in the Bronx, minutes away from the Hunts Point Market. In 2007 an opportunity arose to take over an abandoned city-owned warehouse in the South Bronx. It covers over 188,000 square feet and sits on 7 acres in the Hunts Point peninsula. Kevin gutted the building, redesigned it and added dozens of trucks to service the tri-state area with fine specialty foods. In 2006 Baldor Boston opened its doors in Chelsea, Massachusetts. Baldor Boston is currently moving into a larger newly constructed building slated to open in March of 2013. In 2012 Baldor opened a branch just outside of Washington, D.C. Today Baldor delivers throughout most of New England, all of the tri-state area and the mid-Atlantic region. As of today, Baldor employs over 800 employees and operates a fleet of over 200 delivery trucks.

Kevin's vision and ambition changed the trajectory of the lives and the families of more people than will ever be known. God bless him – he was and will remain an inspiring person that will be greatly missed.

Agriculture Workforce Coalition Creates Immigration Workforce Solutions

By Shelby Rajkovich,
Communications Manager
United Fresh PRODUCE ASSOCIATION

United Fresh and agriculture allies are reaching out to Congress to seize on a rare political opportunity to pass comprehensive immigration reform. A framework for reform set out by a bipartisan group of eight senators is considered to be the roadmap for the debate, and has earned the support of the Agriculture Workforce Coalition (AWC), a broad, unifying coalition that aims to bring attention to the unique needs of the agriculture industry. As a founding member, United Fresh is joined by American Farm Bureau, American Nursery & Landscape Association, Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, U.S. Apple Association, Western Growers and more, in the effort to ensure that the industry's voice is heard.

"This bipartisan initiative addresses a top priority and longstanding challenge for fresh produce industry employers," said Tom Stenzel, United Fresh President and CEO. "We're encouraged these senators have taken the lead and we look forward to further developing these principals into effective legislation."

The Agriculture Workforce Coalition's proposal represents a fresh approach to crafting real solutions for farm employers at a time when optimism is running high that real reform can happen. For example, the AWC has recommended an uncapped Agricultural Worker Visa Program that would allow for greater flexibility than the current H-2A guest worker program. This new proposed program would be administrated by the USDA, where the current guest worker program is overseen by the Department of Labor. The coalition proposed adding this visa program while leaving the current H-2A program intact, thereby allowing employers to continue using H-2A at their option. Several lawmakers seem receptive to the idea of a worker visa program administered by the USDA, and many farm employers believe a USDA-run program could be more responsive to their unique workforce needs.

United Fresh and the AWC remain committed to the goal of ensuring that agricultural employers have access to a stable and skilled workforce. Especially important is that any eventual legislation addresses the needs of both current on-farm employees in need of an adjustment in immigration status and the future workforce requirements of employers.

United Fresh and the AWC remain committed to the goal of ensuring that agricultural employers have access to a stable and skilled workforce. Especially important is that any eventual legislation addresses the needs of both current on-farm employees in need of an adjustment in immigration status and the future workforce requirements of employers.

Educating lawmakers about our industry's labor needs is a top priority. In fact, for the past several weeks, United has been on the Hill clocking time with many of the new faces in the 113th Congress, as well as lawmakers from key states and districts who can play pivotal roles on immigration reform and other priority issues. In February, United's Government Relations Council gathered in Washington, D.C. to support that goal with strategy meetings and face-to-face dialogue with policymakers from Congress and the Obama Administration. The produce industry's leading executives, representing commodity groups, associations and companies from across the nation, contribute their time and expertise on the Council to present a unified voice for our industry on immigration and other issues.

Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, opened the meeting with candid remarks on immigration, outlining the administration's priorities moving forward and emphasizing the need to fix the immigration system that "everyone knows is broken." Vilsack voiced optimism that a deal could be made in the current political environment and applauded the agriculture industry for uniting and recognizing that reform has the best chance of success within a comprehensive package. "It must be comprehensive, it must be bipartisan, and it must happen this year," he said.

United's Government Relations Council then took to Capitol Hill for more than 35 meetings with members of the House of Representatives and the Senate to underscore the necessity of comprehensive immigration reform and recount the impact of labor shortages on their own operations. The discussions outlined the need to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens for labor and employment related programs to ensure the best possible regulatory framework related to hiring practices.

There's a real sense in the halls of Congress that meaningful immigration reform could pass this year. Now, more than ever, a united voice can influence the course of this legislation. United Fresh members are encouraged to make calls, write letters or visit their members of Congress to share the reasons why it is time to secure a stable and viable workforce for our industry. There is no voice more powerful than yours, and we cannot afford to lose this opportunity.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?
Yep, you've got it. Idaho is all about potatoes. Growing the world's finest is what we do best. Always has been. Always will be. Simple as that.
GROWN IN
IDAHO
IdahoPotato.com/Retail

GUEST-WORKER PROGRAM AT HEART OF IMMIGRATION REFORM

By James Prevor
President & Editor-in-Chief

Might this be the year that immigration reform actually happens? If not, it is quite possible that the demands of the produce industry and other industries that need unskilled workers for a guest-worker program could be the blocking point for any immigration deal.

The issue of immigration is, of course, complex. During the Reagan administration, there was an amnesty granted to illegal aliens in exchange for tough border enforcement. The amnesty happened, the border enforcement never did, and, since that time, it has been difficult to imagine how a deal could come together.

The so-called "Gang of Eight," composed of Senators Schumer, McCain, Durbin, Graham, Menendez, Rubio, Bennet and Flake, tried to square this circle by proposing a "Framework for Comprehensive Immigration Reform" that gives illegal aliens a legal status to stay in the country, but postpones broader rights — as to welfare and a path to citizenship — until various steps are realized, including certification by a special commission that the border security measures have been completed.

No amount of legalization or increased immigration is likely to solve the produce industry's labor problems.

In the end, though, the Gang of Eight's proposal is unlikely to resolve the problem. The example of how the proposal deals with those who overstay their visas is instructive.

Although the popular perception is that illegal immigrants all snuck over the border, that is not true. The Department of Homeland Security most recently estimated the illegal alien population at 11.5 million, and the General Accounting Office estimates that 4 to 5.5 million of those illegally in the United States entered the country legally, perhaps on tourist or student visas.

The bipartisan framework addresses this issue by explaining, "Our legislation will require the completion of an entry-exit system that tracks whether everyone entering the United States on temporary visas via airports and seaports have left the country as required by law." This is interesting, and one supposes we can always have better tracking systems, but the lack of a tracking system is not what the GAO report says is holding back enforcement. The GAO says that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Counterterrorism and Criminal Exploitation Unit (CTCEU) arrests very few of these "overstays" because of "competing priorities."

Obviously, the issue of the 11.5-odd million illegal aliens currently in the country is a big one, but the Founders, by establishing in the Constitution that anyone born in America is a citizen, ensured that there would be no permanent illegal underclass. If we stopped illegal immigration, even without new laws, ultimately all residents, however their families got here, would be legal because the children of illegal aliens are legal. So if we could address the issue of new illegal aliens, we could sensibly decide what to do with the illegals currently in the U.S.

The bipartisan framework, however, doesn't demand any action with the information generated. Will we put out an APB on each person who fails to leave the country? Will we set up a dedicated police force that will not have "competing priorities?" The framework is silent and so it is hard to imagine how anyone hesitant on immigration could feel comfortable cutting a deal on this basis.

The Gang of Eight framework does show some interest in the concerns of the produce industry. Those illegals currently working in the industry would receive accelerated opportunities to become citizens based on continued work in agriculture. The framework also includes a plan for a "workable program to meet the needs of America's agricultural industry, including dairy, to find agricultural workers when American workers are not available to fill open positions."

Although the AFL-CIO and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have come out with an agreed "joint statement of shared principles" on the issue of a guest worker program, and though the agreement represents some progress, the sides are far apart. Labor seems to accept the concept in principle, but also seems to want a federal bureau to study labor needs and issue recommendations as to the changing need for temporary workers.

This would be a slow process and would be unlikely to provide the labor agriculture needs in an expeditious fashion. Besides, the statement asks to create a "mechanism that responds to the needs of business in a market-driven way, while also fully protecting the wages and working conditions of U.S. and immigrant workers." As a practical matter, agreeing on a mechanism to do that is likely to be very difficult.

The produce industry is in a very difficult place when it comes to immigration reform. No amount of legalization or increased immigration is likely to solve its labor problems. It requires a dedicated program that provides entry to those willing to work in agriculture, but that very requirement creates a kind of employment ghetto that social activists are simply not likely to find satisfactory.

In 2007, then Senator Barack Obama voted to gut the guest-worker program from a bi-partisan immigration compromise. The sponsors of the bill thought that the program was essential to pass the law, which would have legalized millions of illegal immigrants. Without the guest-worker program, Republicans abandoned the bill, and the effort failed in the face of a Republican filibuster. In the immortal words of Yogi Berra, might we be in for déjà vu all over again? **pb**

A Sustainability Win!

Toss the Black Tray - Consumers Don't Use it Anyway!

That Was Then.

- *Limited graphic impact.*
- *Flimsy plastic tray consumers do not use—plastic they are willing to do without*.*

This Is Now!

+ *Next generation—farm fresh graphics.*
+ *Easy peel tab.*
+ *38% less packaging than our old tray.*
+ *50% LESS packaging by weight than the competition!*

Get your party platter sales out of the dark ages and move them to this new, sleeker design with fresher graphic impact and less packaging.

92 percent* of consumers tested do not use the black tray for serving as intended (even when instructions prompt them to do so). When told about the positive impact removing the tray would have on the environment, the same 92 percent said they would be happy without it.

By removing the black plastic on vegetable trays, our industry would reduce landfill disposal by over 2 million pounds annually.

What are you waiting for?

**Consumer Focus Group n=149-210*

SUNNY SHORES
MANN'S
FAMILY OWNED FOR THREE GENERATIONS

We can help meet your vendor diversity goals.

Certified WBENC Women's Business Enterprise

SALINAS, CALIFORNIA 93901 | 800.884.6266 | www.veggiesmadeeasy.com

© 2012 All Rights Reserved Mann Packing Co., Inc.

How Four Consumer Priorities Are Driving Produce Performance

BY KELLI BECKEL, SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER, NIELSEN PERISHABLES GROUP

In an industry that used to be dictated — and to some extent still is — by crop availability and commodity price, it can be easy to lose sight of the end consumer. That consumer, however, is driving the produce department's performance more than ever. The evolution of consumer priorities — an enduring focus on health, increasingly sophisticated palates and lifestyles that are seemingly always overbooked — has benefited fresh produce arguably more than any other area of the store.

When analyzing sales patterns across produce categories, it becomes apparent that successful products are those that fulfill one or more of four key consumer priority areas: health, convenience, premium and global.

Health

Americans' push to live more healthful lifestyles is clearly not a fad, but a cultural shift. As fresh produce is a centerpiece of a nutritious diet, the department has benefited. Produce department volume sales at retail increased 3 percent in 2012. The New Year is a key time for renewed focus on healthy eating, which boosts categories such as carrots and packaged salads. Carrot's two highest selling weeks of the year occurred in January, posting sales nearly 20 percent higher than the annual average weekly per-store sales. Packaged salads also benefit from New Year's resolutions. In 2012, the category had its third highest sales week of the year in early January, selling, on average, $3,318 per store the week ending January 14, 2012, or 9 percent higher than packaged salads' average weekly per-store sales for the year.

Convenience

Value-added fruits and vegetables continue to succeed as solutions that empower buyers to incorporate fresh produce into their diets with minimal preparation. Value-added vegetables have a wide variety of uses with snacking leading the sub-category growth. Snacking vegetables account for the smallest share of value-added vegetable sales, but their volume sales grew 20 percent in 2012. Value-added vegetable side dishes also posted notable volume growth of 15 percent, and this growth was fueled by innovation. Side dishes experienced the greatest increase in average impressions, or the number of unique items on store shelves in a given week.

Innovation also drove trends for value-added fruit. In the fresh-cut fruit sub-category, volume sales grew 17 percent in 2012 with an increase in impressions of 13 percent.

Premium

Across fresh foods, consumers are showing that price is not the top consideration in purchase decisions. Many premium products are growing despite their higher price points, and in many cases, minimal promotional support. In the produce department, this is playing out in categories such as cherries and specialty mushrooms.

Cherry retail prices were down nearly 10 percent due to a large Washington crop in 2012, but they remain one of the higher priced categories in produce at $2.92 per pound. The category's volume sales increased 10 percent, but Rainiers — the highest priced variety at an average of $4.28 per pound — outpaced the category's growth with a volume increase of 11 percent. Even with a price 47 percent higher than the Bing variety, consumers are increasingly snatching up Rainiers because of their sweeter flavor profile.

Specialty mushrooms are gaining publicity in the food world, and shoppers are buying them more for at-home cooking. Inclusive of varieties such as Shiitake and Oyster mushrooms, specialty mushrooms increased volume sales 5 percent in 2012, even with a price point that was 63 percent higher than the mushroom category average.

Global

Produce items such as mangos and avocados have broken into mainstream America, but many lesser-known products with ethnic roots are also gaining traction. Cilantro volume sales increased 8 percent last year, while edamame and jicama both posted growth of 7 percent. Consumers are also gravitating toward bold flavors; 16 of 22 pepper varieties increased volume in 2012, with hot Habanero peppers posting the greatest increase of 104 percent.

Three-quarters of the 24 specialty fruit sub-categories increased volume sales in 2012, 12 of which were by double digits. Interestingly, among the top four specialty fruits, the more well-known varieties of mango and papaya declined, while kiwis and pomegranates increased by 17 percent and 18 percent, respectively.

Also part of the equation for the increase of global products are variety and distribution. Distribution (generally global sourcing) has put more of the traditional products already popular with U.S. consumers in stores longer. Berries is a perfect example, as growers have built a supply chain that extends throughout North America to Mexico and Central America and down to Chile and Argentina to create a nearly uninterrupted supply of blueberries. Blackberries and strawberries have also benefited, though the sourcing tends to be from various regions of Mexico.

Growth results from consumers buying these products more because they are on the retail shelf longer throughout the year. Also, the unique item offerings have grown year over year across the produce department mainly due to new products coming out of the breeding programs at private companies and universities.

PERISHABLES GROUP®
Keeping Your Business Fresh®

Nielsen Perishables Group consults with clients in the fresh food space. Based in Chicago, IL, the company specializes in consumer research, advanced analytics, marketing communications, category development, supply chain management, promotional best practices and shopper insights. For more information, please visit www.perishablesgroup.com

Increasing Overall Consumption Should Be The Goal

BY JIM PREVOR, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PRODUCE BUSINESS

Analyzing consumer behavior via sales trends is wrought with complexity. For example, back in 1989 when *60 Minutes* ran its famous report on Alar, apple sales plunged. It would be easy to draw a causal link: The TV show raised fears about apples and sales thus declined.

A thorough study of the situation, though, revealed that this was not the whole truth. After the publicity surrounding Alar, many retailers decided to put other items, rather than apples, on special. This meant that there was less space given to apples, the prices were not as promotional, and not as much marketing was done to push apples. Apple sales certainly did decline, but was this decline due to consumer concern over Alar, or due to retailers reducing the frequency of apple promotions? It is not easy to ferret out these differences.

So it is difficult to assess the dynamics at work when we look at issues such as health. There is no question that there is a lot of public health advisory and much marketing around this issue. It certainly seems logical that consumers, looking to enhance their health, will increase their purchases of fresh produce. Yet it is not clear that is happening. Transitory sales figures may go up and down, but there is little evidence that per-capita consumption is actually increasing.

Typically, it is impossible to do controlled experiments as to what influences sales. So if carrot sales and fresh-cut salad sales boom in January, is that due to New Year's resolutions or Super Bowl parties? It is difficult to say.

Some categories certainly are growing in sales. Almost by definition, new innovations in fresh-cut vegetables and fruit will drive these categories. The hope, of course, is that such innovations will boost consumption overall, but it is not clear the extent to which this is happening. Maybe if one spends all day eating junk food in the car, one yearns for healthy fresh food at dinner. Maybe if one snacks all day on cut vegetables, one yearns for a steak at night. Our knowledge on all these things is just not particularly good.

Sometimes production itself is the driver of consumption — a sort of "supply-side" economics for the produce industry. If the volume of Rainier cherries sold is growing faster than that of Bing cherries, that tells us that suppliers are producing more Rainiers. If the growers are correct in their estimation that consumers will pay a premium for this variety, the decision to grow more of it will be profitable. If not, prices will decline but volume will usually still increase as production typically gets sold.

Sometimes, what we call premium products in the trade are, in fact, basic products for certain dishes. So if specialty mushrooms increase in sales, it is not always true that consumers are showing a willingness to trade up to a more expensive product. Maybe those who use Shiitake mushrooms are not simply replacing them for button mushrooms as a side dish for steak; maybe they are using them in an Asian dish that requires the item.

It is also difficult to assess consumer intent if the data we are drawing from is solely from retail. Maybe the growth in specialty mushrooms is a result of consumers economizing by trying to cook dishes they previously purchased in restaurants. Who knows?

Tastes change, cooking becomes more adventurous, and travel and media introduces people to new items and ways to use them. So it is not surprising to see that items such as cilantro, edamame and jicama are increasing in sales and, presumably, consumption. The challenge for the trade is to turn this into additional total consumption. Does an edamame appetizer add a produce dish to the menu or replace a side dish?

We also need to consider that rapid growth often comes on a very small base. It is terrific that Habanero peppers can increase sales by 104 percent, but it is worth noting that the entire chili pepper category — of which Habanero is a tiny part — constitutes less than a third of the bell pepper category.

Without a doubt, global sourcing increases sales of certain products as it puts popular items such as grapes and blueberries on the shelves virtually all year long. The unknown question, though, is to what extent consumers who buy grapes, because they are now available all year, buy fewer, say, apples because their favorite item is always available.

In the end, increased consumption has to come about by changes in eating patterns, notably the replacement of protein-centric plates with produce-centric dishes in which protein serves as a flavoring. In other words, people need to switch from a steak to a stir-fry flavored with beef. Without this kind of switch, consumers may drive sales of one item or another but aren't likely to change overall consumption patterns.

In the end, increased consumption has to come about by changes in eating patterns, notably the replacement of protein-centric plates with produce-centric dishes.

CPMA BOOTH REVIEW

BOOTH #125
CMI
Wenatchee, WA
As one of Washington State's largest apple, pear and cherry shippers, CMI strives to deliver the finest products through improved growing, harvesting and shipping procedures. You can count on CMI for exceptional service and selection of conventional and organic apples, pears and cherries.

BOOTH #217
CAVENDISH PRODUCE
Charlottetown, PEI, Canada
We are the fresh potato specialists offering an assortment of value-added and mainstream potato products. We are your one-stop supplier of top-quality potatoes.

BOOTH #317
MASTRONARDI PRODUCE/SUNSET
Kingsville, ON, Canada
We offer the largest year-round selection of gourmet greenhouse produce including Campari®, Zima™, Kumato™, Angel Sweet™, and Sweet Twister™. Visit our booth to get Inspired By Flavor™.

BOOTH #333
ALLIANCE RUBBER COMPANY
Salinas, CA
Alliance offers a variety of specialty rubber bands and tapes for fruits and vegetables. Each packaging option helps to maintain a fresh appearance, while allowing consumers to inspect the produce.

BOOTH #334
PAKSENSE
Boise, ID
Temperature monitoring just got easier! About the size of a sugar packet, PakSense™ Labels are a new class of temperature recorder. Welcome to cold chain simplicity.

BOOTH #335
CHURCH BROTHERS
Salinas, CA
Church Brothers is a California-based grower/shipper that offers a broad variety of fresh vegetables throughout North America. This year, we are featuring red Heirloom Spinach and several new Kale blends. Visit us to discover how we can optimize your fresh produce needs.

BOOTH #434
THE IDAHO POTATO COMMISSION
Eagle, ID
The Idaho Potato Commission is the marketing arm for the entire Idaho potato Industry. The organization has created the well-known "Grown in Idaho®" seal, which symbolizes quality, known around the world. In 2012, The Idaho Potato Commission celebrated its 75th Anniversary.

BOOTH #454
PEAK OF THE MARKET
Winnipeg, MB, Canada
Peak of the Market is a grower-owned vegetable supplier that has grown quality produce in Manitoba for 71 years. We ship across Canada and the United States and occasionally into Asia and Latin America.

BOOTH #506
CHILEAN FRESH FRUIT ASSOCIATION
Sonoma, CA
There are many new elements in the promotion plan that support the sale of the wide variety of fruits available from Chile.

BOOTH #522
TANIMURA & ANTLE
Salinas, CA
Based in California's Salinas Valley, Tanimura & Antle is a family-owned and -operated business focused on quality, freshness and innovation. Tanimura & Antle produces a full line of fresh vegetables.

BOOTH #535
NATURESEAL, INC.
Westport, CT
NatureSeal's line of products to extend the shelf-life of fresh-cut and minimally processed produce maintains the natural taste, texture and color of cut produce, covering processing from beginning to end.

BOOTH #600
JEMD
Kingsville, ON, Canada
JemD Farms' Red Sun and Golden Sun produce provides you with greenhouse perfection all year long. Stop by our booth to see our new Artisan Series packaging options, including our basket-weave clamshell, modified atmosphere bags and trays.

BOOTH #622
BLUE BOOK SERVICES
Carol Stream, IL
Blue Book Services, the premier credit and marketing agency, has been serving the produce industry since 1901. Companies throughout the supply chain rely on Blue Book ratings and information to make profitable business decisions.

BOOTH #628
TURBANA CORPORATION
Coral Gables, FL
Providing healthy tropical foods that transform people's lives, Turbana Corporation is the fourth largest importer of bananas, the leading importer of Fair Trade Certified bananas and plantains, as well as a growing importer of Fyffes gold pineapples in the U.S.

BOOTH #630
DULCINEA FARMS
Ladera Ranch, CA
At Dulcinea® our commitment is to deliver only the highest quality, best tasting fruit. We are passionate about providing the freshest produce and flavor consumers love year-round.

BOOTH #654
PRODUCE BUSINESS
Boca Raton, FL
PRODUCE BUSINESS is the No. 1 publication reaching produce buyers around the world. Covering marketing, merchandising, management and procurement issues that affect sales of produce and floral items, PRODUCE BUSINESS uniquely "initiates industry improvement."

BOOTH #707
FIRSTFRUITS MARKETING
Yakima, WA
Our growers have a strong passion for producing high quality fruit with a greater purpose. We grow apples and the best varietals, but it's our philosophy that sets us apart.

BOOTH #738
CHELAN FRESH MARKETING
Chelan, WA
Proudly packing in the Chelan Fresh and Trout labels.

BOOTH #806
WELL•PICT
Watsonville, CA
Well•Pict's proprietary berries are naturally developed for superior flavor, juice content, texture and appearance. Well•Pict offers luscious proprietary strawberries year-round, in both conventional and organic lines, as well as an almost 12-month availability of proprietary conventional raspberries.

BOOTH # 807
SUNKIST
Sherman Oaks, CA
Sunkist® is a cooperative owned by thousands of family growers, and since 1893 has been committed to growing and delivering the highest quality, nutritious, and tasty fresh fruit.

CPMA BOOTH REVIEW

BOOTH #829
AMERIFRESH
Scottsdale, AZ
Amerifresh is a top source-based produce marketer covering all major agricultural regions. Our Snoboy brand was trademarked in 1925. Since then, the name has been synonymous with high quality and satisfaction.

BOOTH #939
PRODUCE PRO
Woodridge, IL
Produce Pro is a fully integrated software solution for wholesale food distributors, terminal markets, growers, processors, and importers. Produce Pro provides real-time inventory, traceability, reporting and accounting capabilities.

BOOTH #1021
FARROW GROUP
Windsor, ON, Canada
Russell A. Farrow Limited (Farrow) is a diversified, full-service customs broker to importers in North America, providing customs clearances, freight-forwarding, supply chain management, consulting, expedited deliveries, software development and reporting/auditing tools.

BOOTH #1032
BLANC INDUSTRIES, INC.
Dover, NJ
Blanc Industries, Inc. specializes in high-quality, cost-effective customized signage and displays for the food and retail industries.

BOOTH #1117
DOMEX SUPERFRESH GROWERS
Yakima, WA
Domex Superfresh Growers® is a leading grower and shipper of apples, pears and cherries from the Pacific Northwest. Learn how our difference makes all the difference™.

BOOTH #1201
MISSION PRODUCE, INC.
Oxnard, CA
Mission Produce is a global packer, importer and distributor of avocados and asparagus. Our ripening and distribution centers in California, Colorado, Illinois, New Jersey, Georgia, Texas, Washington and Toronto, enable just-in-time delivery to customers nationwide. Chile.

BOOTH #1305
Pure Hothouse Foods, Inc.
Leamington, Ontario, Canada
Pure Flavor® is a grower, shipper and marketer of greenhouse-grown produce, ready to cook fresh-cut trays, convenience kits and more across North America.

PRODUCE & FLORAL WATCH

TRANSITIONS

HENDRIX PRODUCE, INC.
METTER, GA
Johnny White has joined Metter, GA-based Hendrix Produce, Inc. as director of sales. White joined the company late last year. He brings with him an agricultural background and almost 25 years in the produce industry. Hendrix Produce is a leading grower/packer/shipper of the world-famous Vidalia sweet onion, and ships a host of other sweet onions throughout the year to round out a 52-week supply.

TO-JO FRESH MUSHROOMS
AVONDALE, PA
To-Jo Fresh Mushrooms, Inc. announced that **Julie West Petrovick** has joined the company as director of marketing. In this role, Petrovick will be responsible for the development and implementation of innovative marketing strategies for both the fresh and food products divisions of the company. She will also be responsible for the company's in-house creative services initiatives.

GROWERS EXPRESS
SALINAS, CA
Growers Express announces the promotion of **Merritt Bruce** from director of national accounts to the company's vice president of sales. Bruce has been an employee of Grower's Express since 1990, working in a number of sales roles to help customers of all sizes identify opportunities for growth, and ultimately aid them in reaching their own business goals.

SUNRISE GROWERS
PLACENTIA, CA
Sunrise Growers-Frozsun Foods has announced the hiring of California Strawberry Commission executive, **Mark Murai**, to the newly created position of vice president of strategy and development. Murai's hiring is another key move in Sunrise Growers' strategy to expand its global presence, strengthen its sourcing capabilities, enhance sustainability programs, and accelerate new business growth plans.

Produce Watch is a regular feature of Produce Business. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: Managing Editor, Produce Business, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail us at info@producebusiness.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONCORD JOINS DISNEY ON *PETER PAN* REBATE OFFER

Concord Foods, Brockton, MA, is collaborating with Disney to support the release of Disney's Classic film, *Peter Pan*. Consumers can save $5 by mail when they purchase Disney's *Peter Pan* 3-Disc Diamond Edition Blu-ray Combo Pack PLUS any two Concord Foods' Guacamole or Salsa Seasoning Mixes. The offer is good until May 31, 2013.

FIRSTFRUITS LAUNCHES "TAKE A BITE OUT OF HUNGER" 2013 CAMPAIGN

FirstFruits Marketing, Yakima, WA, created "Take a Bite Out of Hunger" with the goal of helping feed the underserved, while bringing attention to the problem of food insecurity in the United States. This is the third year that FirstFruits Marketing has partnered to make fresh apple donations in a retailer's name to local food banks, with the retailer contributing the cost of freight.

GRIMMWAY FARMS TWEETING ITS WAY TO THE TOP

The No. 1 trend on Twitter is just one of the many success stories that Grimmway Farms has to celebrate, thanks to its partnership with NBC's *The Biggest Loser*. Today, Grimmway continues to expand that relationship with a variety of online promotional efforts to inspire, educate and encourage *Biggest Loser* fans, while also promoting carrots as a healthy snack.

HASS AVOCADO BOARD

DEMAND FOR HASS AVOCADOS INCREASED 34 PERCENT IN 2012

The year 2012 was a record-breaking year for Hass avocados, with the industry topping the 1.5 billion pound consumption mark. The Irvine, CA-based Hass Avocado Board is projecting annual volume for 2013 to reach 1.65 billion pounds, an increase of 10 percent, compared to 2012. An increase in supply and high impact marketing programs in the United States will be the main drivers of this growth.

WONDERFUL PISTACHIOS GETS HEART-CHECK MARK

This spring, Wonderful Pistachios Lightly Salted and No Salt packages will proudly carry the American Heart Association's Heart-Check mark. Both varieties completed the American Heart Association's Heart-Check certification process, and the accompanying Heart-Check mark will debut on packages this spring, reminding consumers that in-shell pistachios are great fit for healthy eating plans.

ORGANIC PERUVIAN RED GLOBE GRAPES AVAILABLE

San Francisco, CA-based Pacific Organic Produce announces the arrival of organic Red Globe grapes from Peru. Historically, South African grapes, which require a 35-day transit, were the only organic grapes to hit the U.S. shores during this period, but now Peru offers a great alternative with less than a 3-week transit time. Pacific Organic is happy to report strong arrivals on both coasts, with 30,000-35,000 4.5k cases available to ship through mid-March.

MASTRONARDI EXPANDS DISTRIBUTION AND INCREASES GREENHOUSE ACREAGE

Mastronardi Produce Ltd. is currently expanding its distribution center in Kingsville, Ontario, which will almost double the company's headquarters. The increase in space at the primary Canadian location is related to the company adding more than 100 greenhouse acres in Ontario alone for 2013. The new 72,000-square-foot expansion is expected to be completed by summer.

SUNSET
INSPIRED BY FLAVOR

FRONTERA PRODUCE CELEBRATES MILESTONE, UNVEILS NEW WEBSITE

Frontera Produce, Ltd., Edinburg, TX, a vertically integrated grower, packer and shipper of fresh produce, kicks off its 20th year of supplying the fresh produce industry by unveiling its newly designed website. The site showcases the company's main product lines — tropicals, melons, ethnics and Texas-grown produce — along with its values, team members and a continued focus on direct consumer-connectivity.

GOLD COAST AND BABÉ FARMS MOVE INTO NEW SANTA MARIA FACILITY

The two prominent farming operations in Santa Maria, CA, are now under the same roof at Fresh Venture Foods. The new facility's design and modernized systems allow for future growth and ensure the continuance of the product quality and unsurpassed food safety standards the two companies have established over the past three decades.

Produce Watch is a regular feature of Produce Business. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: Managing Editor, Produce Business, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail us at info@producebusiness.com

GOOD FOR KIDS
GOOD FOR PRODUCE

Salad bars increase kids' fruit and vegetable consumption.

Hundreds of California schools want salad bars. Help United Fresh reach our goal to donate salad bars to 350 California schools by May 2013.

Make a contribution today to Let's Move Salad Bars to California Schools.

Contact Andrew Marshall
(202) 303 -3407
amarshall@unitedfresh.org

unitedfresh.org/saladbars

LET'S MOVE Salad Bars to Schools™
www.saladbars2schools.org

United Fresh Foundation
CENTER FOR NUTRITION AND HEALTH

floralbusiness...

a convenient hand-held tool to help your floral business bottom line

FLORAL BUSINESS is . . .

- a new magazine concept exclusively devoted to supermarket floral executives
- a magazine addressing marketing, merchandising, management and procurement concerns
- a magazine providing important how-to information on topics such as pricing, labor, space-to-sales, seasonal promotions, care and handling and value-added services
- a magazine that seeks answers from within the industry and reaches out to the retailers themselves – as well as leading floral marketers – for solutions
- a magazine that is easy-to-read and pass along – all the way down to the store-level floral managers

FLORAL BUSINESS – your tool kit to prosperity

Catch it Quarterly and online Every Day!
Quarterly: September, December, March and June

Available online every day at www.FloralBusinessMagazine.com

MARCH 3 - 5, 2013
CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL FOOD & BEVERAGE SHOW
Canada's foodservice event of the year
Conference Venue: Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Conference Management: Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, Toronto, Canada
Phone: 416-923-8416 • Fax: 416-923-1450
Email: info@crfa.ca • Website: www.crfa.ca

March 3 - 5, 2013
INTERNATIONAL RESTAURANT & FOODSERVICE SHOW OF NEW YORK
The International Restaurant and Foodservice Show of New York is the only comprehensive industry event devoted to the restaurant, foodservice and hospitality market.
Conference Venue: Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York, NY
Conference Management: Reed Exhibitions, Norwalk, CT
Phone: 203-840-5556 • Fax: 203- 840-9556
Email: inquiry@internationalrestaurantny.com
Website: www.internationalrestaurantny.com

March 10 - 15, 2013
UNITED FRESH PRODUCE EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 2013
Invest in yourself, your business, your success.
Conference Venue: Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
Conference Management: United Fresh Produce Association, Washington DC
Phone: 202-303-3400 • Fax: 202-303-3433
Email: united@unitedfresh.org
Website: www.unitedfresh.org

APRIL 3, 2013
NEW ENGLAND PRODUCE & FLORAL EXPO
Conference Venue: Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Boston, MA
Conference Management: New England Produce Council, Burlington, MA
Phone: 781-273-0444 • Fax: 781-273-4154
Email: nepc2@rcn.com
Website: www.newenglandproduce.com

April 10, 2013
FPFC NORTHERN CA EXPO
Since 1965, the Fresh Produce & Floral Council has been providing unique networking and business growth opportunities for professionals in the produce and floral industries in California.
Conference Venue: Alameda Fairgrounds, Pleasanton, CA
Conference Management: Fresh Produce & Floral Council, La Mirada, CA
Phone: 714-739-0177 • Fax: 714-739-0226
Email: info@fpfc.org • Website: www.fpfc.org

April 17 - 19, 2013
CANADIAN PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION
Annual convention and trade show provides a unique opportunity for industry leaders to connect with peers and enhance business opportunities in Canada, while also offering an exceptional combination of education and networking opportunities
Conference Venue: Direct Energy Centre, Toronto, Ontario Canada
Conference Management: Canadian Produce Marketing Association, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Phone: 613-226-4187 • Fax: 613-226-2984
Email: info@cpma.ca • Website: www.cpma.ca

April 21 - 22, 2013
NORTHWEST FOODSERVICE SHOW 2013
Join us for our 50th Anniversary! This is the region's largest, longest running and most comprehensive restaurant and foodservice industry trade event.
Conference Venue: Oregon Convention Center, Portland, OR
Conference Management: Oregon & Washington Restaurant Association, Wilsonville, OR
Phone: 800-645-7350 • Fax: 503-682-4455
Email: info@nwfoodserviceshow.com
Website: www.nwfoodserviceshow.com

April 21 - 23, 2013
WOMEN'S FRESH PERSPECTIVES CONFERENCE 2
Conference Venue: FireSky Resort & Spa, Scottsdale, AZ
Conference Management: Produce Marketing Association, Newark, DE
Phone: 302-607-2155 • Fax: 302-731-2409
Email: dsiegfried@pma.com
Website: www.pmafoundation.com

April 30 - May 2, 2013
SIAL CANADA 2013
Conference Venue: Palais des Congres de Montreal, Montreal, Canada
Conference Management: IMEX Management, Inc., Charlotte, NC
Phone: 704-365-0041 • Fax: 704-365-8426
Email: EricH@ImexManagement.com
Website: www.imexmgt.com

MAY 7 - 9, 2013
SIAL CHINA 2013
International food, beverage, wine and spirits exhibition in China.
Conference Venue: Shanghai New Int'l Expo Centre, Shanghai, China
Conference Management: IMEX Management, Inc., Charlotte, NC
Phone: 704-365-0041 • Fax: 704-365-8426
Email: erich@imexmanagement.com
Website: www.imexmgt.com

May 14 - 16, 2013
UNITED FRESH 2013
Conference Venue: San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, CA
Conference Management: United Fresh Produce Association, Washington, D.C.
Phone: 202-303-3424 • Fax: 202-303-3433
Email: united@unitedfresh.org
Website: www.unitedfresh.org

May 18 - 21, 2013
AMERICAN FOOD FAIR 2013
Your recipe for global success
Conference Venue: McCormick Place, Chicago, IL
Conference Management: NASDA, Fairfax, VA
Phone: 703-934-4700 • Fax: 703-934-4899
Email: aff@naylor.com
Website: www.nasdatradeshows.org

May 18 - 21, 2013
NRA SHOW 2013
The International Foodservice Marketplace
Conference Venue: McCormick Place, Chicago, IL
Conference Management: National Restaurant Association, Chicago, IL
Phone: 312-853-2537 • Fax: 312-853-2548
Email: kskibbe@restaurant.org
Website: www.restaurant.org/show

To submit events to our Forward Thinking calendar, please email info@producebusiness.com

CRUNCH PAK®

We think snacks should be as fun as the game!

A wisely selected snack can help boost energy and improve performance. That's why smart snackers choose Crunch Pak!

WWW.CRUNCH PAK.COM

CRUNCH PAK. LLC | PHONE: 509.78.APPLE
300 SUNSET AVE. | CASHMERE, WA 98815

Costco, Sheri Flies, The James Beard Foundation Leadership Award And How Sustainability Differs From Charity

FROM JIM PREVOR'S PERISHABLE PUNDIT 01.22.2013

A hat tip to Andreas Schindler at Pilz Schindler GmbH, which promotes its Don Limon brand of limes around the world. He sent us a link to year-old video of Sheri L. Flies, accepting the 2011 James Beard Foundation Leadership Award.

Sheri is an intriguing individual. She is trained as a lawyer and for 13 years was Costco's Corporate Counsel. In that capacity, she got involved in a project by which she studied the supply chain that began with a cooperative of farmers growing French green beans in Guatemala. In the end, she was so captivated by the work that she recreated her career and now works at Costco as Assistant General Merchandise Manager — Corporate Foods.

Costco is a fascinating company and, by all accounts, Sheri is a wonderful person — not only highly competent, but genuinely caring about the fate of people in the whole supply chain. She deserved this award, and Costco deserved the award — mostly because so many who address sustainability choose to ignore the ethical component.

Companies like to focus on energy-savings, because that can save them money. Sheri insisted, and Costco executives agreed, to focus on the ethical component of sustainability.

We have written a lot about sustainability, and we have found that in the business world, it has become intellectually incoherent. Although we have had correspondents who have argued that sustainability can be profitable, we don't think that is a meaningful definition.

After all, if it is profitable to do something, then it is just proper business management to do it. In order for sustainability to have a meaning distinct from proper business management, you need to be able to say that an executive who believes in sustainability would do X, but an executive who does not would not follow that course.

The problem is that all these values — whether sustainability or food safety — are problematic because companies are in business to produce a return to their shareholders and because society wants food to be available inexpensively.

We once ran a piece that mentioned an incident when Karen Caplan, President and CEO at Frieda's, inquired of a group of retailers if, in light of their deep dedication to food safety, they had changed their KPIs — Key Performance Indicators — and nobody had.

The bottom line is that whether sustainability or food safety, companies tend to adopt minimum standards and then the issue is moot. In other words, it is very difficult to get retail buyers to pay extra to exceed the firm's minimum standard on food safety, sustainability, traceability or any other metric. This is because at the end of the year, all else being equal, if there are two divisions and one made $10 million that year and conformed to the retailer's standards for food safety and sustainability, while another executive ran a division that made $8 million but bought product that significantly exceeded the retailer's standard, the bonus goes to the more profitable division.

Sheri's acceptance speech is worth watching. She is, obviously, deeply committed to helping women; indeed we would urge those who give out the Women in Produce Award at United to consider Sheri for the award, where she would join her Costco co-worker, Heather Shavey, in the pantheon of great female leaders of the trade.

The bottom line is that whether sustainability or food safety, companies tend to adopt minimum standards and then the issue is moot. In other words, it is very difficult to get retail buyers to pay extra to exceed the firm's minimum standard on food safety, sustainability,

Yet we find the whole question of sustainability and its relationship to businesses something of a quandary. First, in the video, Sheri is introduced and given the award, and the presenter highlights that her efforts led Costco to set up a foundation to "support the farmers and their families, to ensure that they have access to higher education, to clean water and health care."

This is surely a wonderful thing, and both Sheri and Costco merit praise for starting such a foundation. But this is not sustainability. It is the opposite of sustainability. This is charity to help poor people. If the supply chain was sustainable, the farmers would make enough money from selling their crop that they would not require charity.

Now we don't criticize Costco or any other retailer on this point. We understand fully that Costco can't just decide to pay triple the price for green beans; it has to sell products competitively. This is why efforts to help growers often revolve around things such as Fair Trade initiatives. In these initiatives, consumers are notified that they have an opportunity to pay more and help producers in developing countries.

It is also, though, why many are hostile to big box retailing, and organizations such as Costco, Wal-Mart, etc., that don't so much pay market rate as create the market. To those who want people along the food chain to get paid more, the leverage of these large buyers is not desirable. Of course, as a society, we have allowed these organizations to flourish because with their efficiency and buying power, they deliver such value to consumers.

The 26th Annual

MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORT

Can produce staffers be trusted with consumers' health and wellness?

With New Years' Resolutions still in mind, and a renewed public interest in health and wellness, grocery store consumers are thinking twice about what they put in their carts. Salads filled with Super Foods such as kale and berries are becoming commonplace in foodservice, and thus, consumers are looking to mimic these dishes at home. Tropicals are also sharing the spotlight. But in order for these items to truly shine and profit from the attention of superchefs, restaurants, television shows and magazines, etc., the trickle-down effect must arrive all the way at the retail-level. For that to happen, retailers must be staffed with friendly, knowledgeable employees who stay up-to-date with the latest trends, including the health factor of these items.

With that in mind, we gave our "undercover shoppers" two recipes with healthful ingredients, some that are often referred to as Super Foods, including kale, berries, mangos and avocados. We sent them out to a variety of retailers across the country looking for these items, with questions insisting on their inherent healthfulness. **BY CAROL BAREUTHER, JODEAN ROBBINS, MADELINE MESA, AND MEREDITH AUERBACH**

Here at PRODUCE BUSINESS, we want to be sure that produce department associates across the country are knowledgeably, helpfully and happily engaging their customers. In an effort to better serve retailers and reveal the areas in which produce staff needs to improve, PRODUCE BUSINESS conducted our 26th Annual Mystery Shopper Report. We gathered a handful of our contributing and staff editors and sent them to various stores around the country at the beginning of the New Year. They were all armed with the same two produce-heavy recipes: Mango Salsa and Raspberry & Blueberry Kale Salad. We instructed them to ask challenging questions about the items they would need, and try to engage the employees in an effort to see how well each produce department is represented. We also asked them to specifically focus on health and wellness, and to throw in a question or two about how to prepare potatoes in a healthful way.

While our report is not meant to criticize any one store or chain, there are a few that could definitely use some pointers, while others set seriously high standards. Here's what we found:

NORTHEAST REPORT

STORE 1:

Well-Trained And Polite Employees

We walked into this medium-sized regional chain at mid-afternoon on a Monday. The shelves looked bare. Maybe it was the snowstorm two days earlier, or because it was New Year's Eve, or just the day of the week. I worried about finding all my ingredients for Mango Salsa. The department was deserted as well, save for a few fellow shoppers. A woman dressed in black slacks and a red embroidered holiday vest clutching a clipboard bustled by from the direction of the front-end registers.

"Excuse me," my husband called out. "Do you work in produce?"

"I work all over the store," she answered with a friendly smile and little laugh. "How can I help you?"

"I want to make this recipe for Mango Salsa tonight, you know, something healthy to start off the New Year."

I immediately interjected. "Could you show me what mangos are the healthiest?"

"We only have one kind," she answered. She led us to one display of Tommy Akins on the first position specials table between 5-lb. boxes of clementines and a small display of Hass avocados. Ironically, there was no price sign on the mangos. We then followed her two tables further back where she pointed out large and small sized fruit. We couldn't see any difference in size and all the mangos were a bit too soft, slightly wrinkled and generally old looking. Finally, she took us to the mangos in the organic section. Since the organics were our last stop, I challenged her by asking if organic was the most nutritious.

"They don't have pesticides on them I can tell you that," she answered. "I don't really eat mangos so I can't tell you about the flavor.

Some people say organic tastes better. I think it's really a personal preference. Is there anything else you need help with?"

I pointed to the Jalapeño peppers on my printed recipe and asked where I could find them. She quickly walked to a display of six cardboard boxes labelled "Assorted Hot Peppers" and pointed to what she thought were the Jalapeños. Just as she did, a gentleman walked up and she asked him if she was correct. He said, "Yes, those are the Jalapeños," and scooted off. I learned later he was one of the produce clerks.

There was one bunch of cilantro, another recipe ingredient, adjacent to the peppers.

"I only need to two tablespoons of cilantro," I said. "Do you know if it would be OK, nutrition-wise, to buy one of these squeeze bottles of cilantro instead?"

"Anything processed isn't as good as fresh. Let's look," she answered, picking up the tube and pointing a finger triumphantly at the ingredient list. "See there's salt, and dextrose, which is another word for sugar. Like I said, you'd be better off buying the fresh."

My last question was what would make a good dipper for the salsa as an alternative to salty chips. She responded by telling me the aisle where I could find no-salt-added corn chips.

We gave a last look around the produce department for signs of nutrition information in general. I found only one. It was an orange-colored half-poster-board-size sign handwritten in black marker with the words: "Vitamin C for an immunity boost. Citrus fruits. Tastes great every day." It was taped over the Navel display.

STORE 2:
Out-of-stock Kale

The produce department in this Northeast-headquartered chain was moderately busy at 6 p.m. on a Thursday night. We walked up to a young man dressed in a green apron, blue polo and jeans who was stacking apples in neat rows. "I'm looking for kale for my salad but I can't find any," I inquired. He walked over to the wet rack of leafy greens. Indeed, there was a sign above the empty rack that read kale. "We seem to be sold out right now," he said. "It's pretty popular."

"Oh yes," I replied, "I read somewhere that it's a Super Food and I'm really trying to eat more healthfully."

"I don't know about that," he answered. "We had it on sale for $1.99 a pound, so maybe that's why we're out."

I asked him what might be the next healthiest green I could purchase as a replacement. He suggested collards or green leaf lettuce. Then, he walked right back to the apples. I followed him.

"I'm sorry, but I also need an avocado. Is there a low-fat avocado?" I asked.

"I'm not sure, but we carry only one type. Anything else," he answered, looking as if he hoped he was finally off the hook.

"One more thing," I said. My recipe also called for blueberries and raspberries. I told him I noticed the box said the fruit was from Chile. Was it safe?

"We've never had a problem. But if you're worried, buy the organic," he suggested. The 6-oz. clamshells of organic berries were priced $1 more than conventional, at a price of $2.99 versus $3.99.

Lastly, I tested his berry nutrition knowledge by asking if strawberries were as healthy as raspberries if I wanted to make a substitute. "Any berry is good," he said. "I don't think it really matters." He excused himself and said he had to get back to work.

STORE 3:
Happy To Help

Bustling is the best way to describe the produce department in this large regional chain on a Saturday morning. Not only were shelves amply stocked, but three produce personnel dressed in matching uniform-style shirts and pants were on the floor, either working the displays or chatting with shoppers. When I saw one of the clerks finish her conversation and start to walk past me as I stood at the specialty potato display, I called out to her: "Good morning. Could you help me a minute?" I asked.

"Sure," she pleasantly replied.

I told her that my father loved potatoes. However, he had recently been diagnosed with diabetes. I wanted to make him a healthy potato dish, without the usual butter and cheese, and had chosen a salad that called for fingerling potatoes. "Are fingerlings low in carbohydrates?" I inquired.

"Let's see," she said. The young, female clerk picked up the 1-lb. bag of fingerlings and read from the nutrition facts panel. "It says there are 17 grams of carbohydrates per serving and seven servings in this package. Does that help?"

"Sort of, but is 17 grams a lot or a little?" I pushed back.

"It seems like a lot, but I'm not sure. Most people buy these for the taste and because they cook faster since they are smaller," she replied.

Next, I told her my recipe called for 1/4-cup of corn and I wanted to use fresh. She showed me a 4-pack over-wrapped tray of four husked ears of organically grown corn. This was the only fresh corn product available. "If I buy this, what are healthy ways I could use up the leftovers?" I challenged.

"I don't know. I just eat mine straight up with butter," she said, laughing.

Roasted red peppers were the next ingredient I put to the test. I asked if I should buy fresh and roast myself or would it be just as healthful — and faster — to buy the jarred type. "The red peppers in a jar are over in the deli and they're packed in oil," she explained. "So it seems like it would be better to get the fresh if you don't want a lot of fat."

Lastly, I led her over to the asparagus display. "Do you think there are any vitamins left if it's had to travel all the way from Peru," I asked.

"I don't know," the clerk answered. "It does taste pretty good though. We ate some at home last week." She quickly fessed up that the asparagus she made for dinner was dressed with hollandaise sauce.

I purposely looked around the department for nutrition information. I found it in the form of a book laying open on a black metal stand adjacent to the fresh-cut refrigerated case. The cover of the book said it contained

$ERVING UP SAN FRANCISCO'S FINEST

"I use Little Gems Sweet Lettuce at RN74 for its exceptional flavor and texture, consistency of quality, and the versatility that it lends to both hot and cold dishes."

CHEF JASON BERTHOLD, EXECUTIVE CHEF
RN74 • SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Add Value with Our New Little Gems™ Sweet Lettuce

- Delicious petite lettuce with a sweet crisp flavor
- Field-Packed For Freshness® by premier grower of this unique lettuce variety
- Favored by San Francisco chefs for years, now coming to retail markets
- Eye-catching packaging for superior product display
- Available year round

CALL YOUR TANIMURA & ANTLE SALES REP FOR A SAMPLE CASE TODAY! (800) 772-4542

MEMBER OF LGMA

WWW.TAPRODUCE.COM • LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

TANIMURA & ANTLE

nutrition facts for over 300 produce items. If I wasn't looking, though, I wouldn't have found it. It appeared that there had once been a sign on the back of the stand as the remnants of adhesive were still attached to the black metal. Yet, there was no other call-out that this was a source of nutrition information.

EASTERN REPORT:
STORE 1:
Rude But Well-Informed

Armed with the Mixed Berry & Kale recipe, I visited a discount chain in a mixed-income neighborhood on a Thursday morning. The store was very sterile and basic with boxes and pallets of produce stacked to greet shoppers on entry — not very visually pleasing. To its credit, the department boasts a 25x20-ft. walk-in cooler where most of the produce was displayed, but crowded, narrow aisles made it difficult to maneuver.

A few customers of various ethnicities were browsing the department as I entered. I approached a gentleman stacking some boxes in the cooler saying, "Excuse me, I need some help finding some items for a recipe."

"Yeah?" he replied, turning to me with a box in his hands.

"I need kale," I said showing him the printed recipe.

"It's over there," he said with a shake of his head and then turned to get back to his re-stocking.

"Do I need to cook it?" I pushed further. "Or do I use it raw?"

"You can do whatever you like with it. Just make sure you clean it good," he said curtly.

"OK," I resigned. "I also need a ripe avocado."

"The avocados are over there," he said with a gesture of his chin. "But I don't know how to tell if they're ripe. I guess if they're soft."

"Alright," I said. "What about green onions — are those the same as chives?"

With that question, he finally put down the box in his hands and moved. "No they're not the same," he stated. "Follow me, the green onions are here."

At that point, another customer interjected to ask for green beans. "I don't know where the green beans are right now," he answered him. "Everything just came in."

I followed and he handed me a bunch of green onions. "And right here is the kale," he added. He then proceeded to give me a well-informed explanation of how to choose the kale based on the size of the stems and helped pick out a good bunch for me.

"I also need berries," I stated.

"All we have are blueberries," he replied and pointed to the display.

"Are they ripe?" I queried. "Do they taste good?"

"I dunno," he answered. "People are buying them, so I guess so."

"One last question," I dared. "I want to serve a potato dish but eliminate the fat. Do you know of anything I can do with potatoes that doesn't involve cheese or butter?"

"No I don't," he simply replied.

I thanked him and continued to browse the department. A short time later I heard him yell, "Hey, mister. Were you looking for green beans? There are some here."

My shopping experience revealed at that chain you not only get discount prices, but apparently discount service as well.

STORE 2:
Enthusiastically Going Above And Beyond

My next visit was to a large regional chain in a mixed professional/blue-collar neighborhood on a slow mid-week afternoon. The large department was right at the entrance to the store, bordered by about 50 feet of wet racks and boasting large displays of fruit to draw in customers. Quality was average. The few customers shopping had a mix of staple items like lettuce, bananas and apples in their cart.

After waiting about 10 minutes by the mangos, I saw an older gentleman appear to restock the berry display nearby. "Excuse me," I called to him. "I'm trying to make this recipe but I need some help.

"Sure," he said turning toward me. I showed him the Mango Salsa recipe.

"I need three ripe mangos, but I don't know how to tell if they're ripe," I explained.

He came over to stand by me at the mango display. "They should just have a little give," he replied, picking three out. "These should be good."

"Thanks," I said. "Do you know a good way to cut them?"

"Just cut it in half and then pull the seed out," he advised. "Then you can skin it and slice it."

"OK, I also need a Jalapeño," I stated. "But aren't they spicy? I don't like spicy food."

"Jalapeños are spicy," he affirmed, then motioned and led me to the Chili peppers. "You could use this instead. It's a Poblano, and is milder than the Jalapeño, but still has flavor." Then he pointed to the Habaneros. "Now those for sure you want to stay away from," he joked. "They're hot!"

I laughed and then asked, "Do you have cilantro?"

"Right over here," he replied leading the way, but when we arrived there was no cilantro on the herb rack. "Wait a minute," he stated. "I'll be right back."

He returned in a few minutes with several bunches of cilantro and handed me one. "Is there anything else?" he asked.

"Well," I hesitated. "My father-in-law is coming for dinner and he can't have any fat. I wanted to serve potatoes, but I don't know how to make them delicious without butter and sour cream. Any ideas?"

He thought for a moment, and then motioned for me to accompany him to the potato display. "I'd recommend using these yellow potatoes," he suggested. "They have a creamy, buttery taste already so you wouldn't really need to put anything on them."

This manager had a great combination of enthusiasm and information, but still lacked hands-on knowledge of some items, especially tropicals.

STORE 3:
Availability And Service Suffer

My last visit was to a large, national super-

Dried to Perfection.

Sun Dried Figs • Sun Dried Apricots • Banana Chips • Sun Dried Tomatoes

Please visit us at Booth 416

GREAT LAKES
INTERNATIONAL TRADING INC.

Great Lakes International Trading, Inc. • 858 Business Park Drive • Traverse City, MI 49686 • 231.947.2141 • www.glit.com

store. I went on a busy weekday afternoon and there were about seven shoppers in the department, which was large with average quality, but excellent prices. I approached an employee while she was restocking a lemon display.

"Excuse me," I said. "I need some help."

"Sure," she replied cordially, pushing the restock cart out of the way.

"I want to make this recipe but don't know about some of the ingredients," I said, showing the Kale Salad recipe. "I need Kale. What is that?"

She pointed, "It's the curly green in the bags over there. It says kale on it."

"OK, thanks," I replied. "I also need an avocado, but how can I tell if it's ripe?"

"If it's ripe, it should be soft when you squeeze it," she stated. "The avocados are over here."

She motioned me to follow her and led me around the display corner, but when we arrived, the bin for the avocados was empty. "Sorry," she said. "I guess we're all out. Do you need something else?"

"Yes," I said. "I need two tablespoons of lime juice. How many limes would that be?"

"Oh, that's easy," she answered. "Just use the pre-squeezed lime juice that is over here." Again I followed her and once again the bin was empty.

"Oh, sorry," she said. "We're out of that, too."

"It also says blueberries and raspberries," I dared request. "Do you know if there are a lot of pesticides on berries? Should I look for organic instead?"

"Um, I'm not sure about the pesticides," she replied as she led me to the berry displays. "My mom eats a lot of berries and doesn't worry about it. But if you're concerned then there is another store near here that sells a lot of organic. Oh, I don't think we have raspberries or blueberries. The blueberries should be here but there aren't any. Sorry."

"Wow, you're out of a lot," I exclaimed. "Must be a busy day."

"Well our department manager got promoted," she revealed. "Since he hasn't been replaced yet, there isn't really anyone to manage the department."

"I hope you get one soon," I replied. "Do you by any chance know of a healthy recipe I could use potatoes in?"

"No, sorry," she said shaking her head. "Maybe you could Google it?"

As I moved away from her to return to shopping, I noticed a huge end-cap of blueberries on sale. I left the store saddened that at such great prices, availability and service suffered because of one person's promotion.

SOUTHEAST REPORT

STORE 1:

Helpful, But Lacking Produce Knowledge

I went to a major southeast supermarket chain around 1pm on a Monday afternoon. The store was low on shoppers, which always makes the shopping experience more pleasurable, especially for consumers looking for a lot of advice with ingredients. Upon entering the store, I was greeted by a huge Super Bowl beer advertisement, pretty funny considering not five feet away was the store's wine section. I passed that, then the flower section, and found myself in the dairy aisle. I had trouble locating the produce section, but after making a right at the bakery I found the largest produce area in the very back corner of the store, perhaps not the smartest idea if you are hoping to have pumped-up produce sales.

The produce department was large, with plenty of room to navigate a cart through the

aisles. The produce itself was well kept and looked clean, bright and tasty. I walked around looking at the seven other shoppers in the department with their carts full of bread, yogurt and other weekly groceries. I saw one man stocking orange juice. Seeing no one else in the department, I walked over to the man.

"Could you help me please?" I asked.

"Sure, give me one second, OK?" he said with a heavy accent and broken English. When he was done stocking the row he was working on, he asked me how he could help.

"I'm having trouble finding some of these products for a recipe I'm trying to make," I said. "I need three, large, ripe mangos."

He took the list, looked at it and walked me over to the mangos, which were right behind me. "How many you need?" he asked.

"Three," I said as he ripped a plastic bag off the roll for me and grabbed three mangos.

"How do I know if they're ripe? By the color?" I asked.

"Here, feel this," he said holding out a mango toward me. "It's soft. If it's hard you have to wait another day." He asked me what else I needed. I told him I needed one medium Jalapeño pepper. Again, he took my list and led me to the peppers. He grabbed another plastic bag and held out Jalapeno peppers showing me what they were. "How many? One or two?" he asked.

"The recipe says one," I said. "What's the difference between this pepper and a red pepper?"

I think he misunderstood the question because instead of telling me the difference between a Jalapeño and a red pepper, he started showing me the different colors of peppers, pointing out the yellows, reds, and greens.

"How many? How big?" he asked about the red pepper I needed next.

"I just need one," I said. "It's going to be diced."

"Oh, diced?" he asked, then he led me over to a fresh-cut section where racks of plastic containers of diced produce were displayed. He picked up a Tri-Pepper Mix and showed me that yellow, green, and red peppers were all in it. Since Jalapeños weren't included in the mix, I wouldn't have the heat factor I needed if I went with that item, so I asked him if it would work with the recipe.

"Yes because they are diced," he replied. "What else?"

He was very eager to help me with everything on my list. Even though I knew I wouldn't find it in the produce section, I asked about the cumin I needed. He had no idea what that was, but said I might be able to find that and the kosher salt in the grocery area. Before I left, I asked him about the best way to peel a mango.

"Peel?" he asked.

"Yes. The recipe says to peel and dice the mangos," I said.

Again, he led the way to another corner of the department and showed me another small plastic container with peeled and sliced mango. "This might be easier," he said. "How many?"

I told him I'd use the one container of sliced mangos and do a test run and come back later for the big mangos.

"That's a good idea," he said and took the three mangos I didn't need back to their rack. "Thank you again," I said before checking out.

"Anytime."

STORE 2:
Seasonal Smarts

Early Monday morning I went to a popular chain supermarket that specializes in

THE CANADIAN PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

WE ARE THE VOICE OF PRODUCE IN CANADA.

WE HELP THE PRODUCE INDUSTRY PRODUCE POSITIVE RESULTS

CPMA is the national voice of produce in Canada, representing and advancing the industry's interests, from farm gate to plate.

Visit us online for more information and to apply for membership.

cpma.ca CPMA

organics. Just outside the store there was inviting flower and citrus displays welcoming me. Inside was the same warm and friendly feeling, thanks to the store's low lighting and high ceiling, which gave the small store an open feeling.

The produce department was immediately to my right, so I didn't have to go searching. It was chilly in the store, but the produce looked fresh and clean. There were a few shoppers in the store but I was having trouble finding help in the produce area. I saw one man stacking potatoes but before I could ask him for help he disappeared into the back.

A little bit later a woman came out placing produce items in a crate. "Excuse me, could you help me?" I asked. "I'm having trouble finding some of these items."

"Sure," she said. "What do you need?"

"I need one bunch of kale. Is that an herb?" I asked.

"No, it's a spiced lettuce," she said leading me to the wet rack. She had trouble finding the kale among the many leafy greens. After a little searching she found Lacinato Kale. "This will do the trick," she told me even though I had yet to share my recipe with her.

"Now I need one ripe avocado," I told her.

"They're right here," she showed me. "But I don't know how to tell if they are ripe."

"What about blueberries? Are they in season?" I asked her, and she led me from the avocados to the blueberries and raspberries.

"I'm not sure," she replied. Let me go get you someone who works in produce." She went to the back and a few seconds later the same man who was stacking potatoes earlier came out to help me. I asked again about the blueberries and raspberries.

"The blueberries are in season. That's why they're so cheap," he told me. "Raspberries we get year-round but they're a little pricey."

We went back to the avocados and I asked him how to tell if an avocado is ripe. "If you feel the ripe ones, they're soft," he said. "These right here are pretty soft."

Then I asked about preparing the kale. He looked at it and suggested it wasn't the right kale for my recipe. "That's the only kale we've had all week though," he said. "I think there's a problem in California."

I told him I'd wait and buy the kale somewhere else. I was about the ask him about green onions, but the produce department become busy with customers and the man left to help them. So I bought my avocado and

Consulting to Retailers and Suppliers

- 38-year veteran of the produce industry
- Knowledge from "field to fork"
- Conventional and Organic Arenas
- Retail, Category Development, Sales Strategy, and all things Produce

Harris Consulting Solutions

Contact **Don Harris** at:
Phone: **269-903-7481**
E-mail: **Don@HarrisProduceVision.com**

blueberries, and was on my way.

NORTHWEST REPORT

STORE 1:

Well-stocked, But Staff MIA

On a cold and blustery Friday at 11 am, I strolled into a very well stocked but totally empty department. I looked around and found everything called for in all of the recipes. Other departments seemed busy enough. A good 10 minutes later, I flagged down a staff member from the adjacent bakery department and asked to speak with the produce manager or other staffer. She immediately left to locate somewhat from the department. Another five or six minutes later, a man who had been working a deli case walked over and asked if he could help. I asked, "Are you familiar with kale? I keep reading it's a Super Food, and now that the holidays are over, I think I need to know more about it."

The name on his tag was Ron and it said he was from perishables. Ron replied, "If I don't know the answer to your question, I will find someone who does." We walked over to the cooking vegetable section where I pointed to the Lacinato kale bunches, commenting on the beautiful blue-green color. Ron said, "These varieties are usually cooked because they have a bitter taste that mellows a bit with cooking. If you want fresh, come over to the deli department and I'll show you a salad we make that uses baby kale; it has a totally different taste." I followed him over and he dished out a taste; it was indeed a delicious salad. He pointed to a baby kale mixed greens clamshell in the packaged salad section as the basic ingredient. It looked fine, but at closer inspection, I noticed it was a greens mix that included baby kale, spinach and other baby greens.

I told him I was also interested in mangos, which were on sale that week, and I asked him the difference between the sale display and one at the back of the department, which offered smaller but riper fruit. Ron gave a good effort to explain but his answer was less than clear.

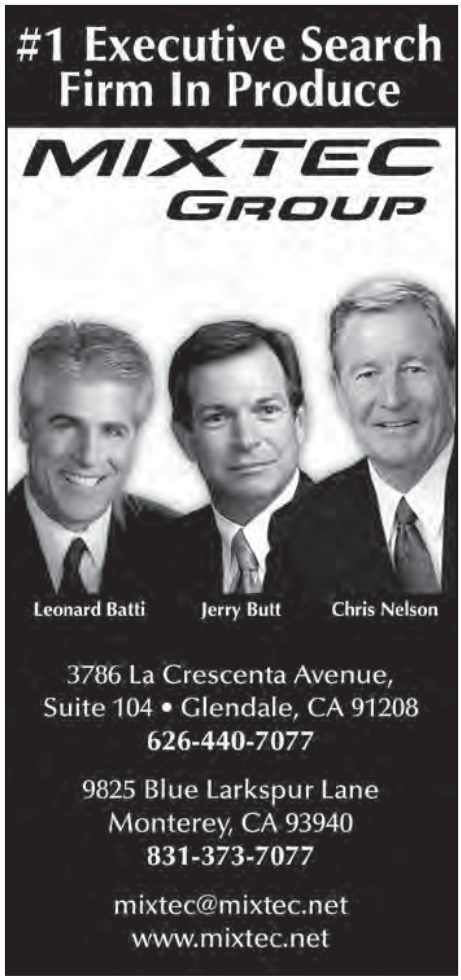
I finally asked if the store had nutrition information on kale. He headed for the back and emerged several minutes later to say, "The book we normally use isn't there. I'm sorry." This department had generally excellent information signage including hotness ranges for fresh chiles and descriptions of less familiar vegetables and herbs. However, nutrition information was not a priority.

STORE 2:

Friendly And Knowledgeable Shopping

Saturday morning is a great time to shop for produce in this urban, limited space store of a national specialty foods and private label retailer. Over the past couple of years, the selection has expanded and the store frequently has some of the best prices in town for produce. The store's audience tends to be university students and esoteric middle- to lower-middle class people. Many arrive by bicycle even in winter.

A staffer saw me eyeing the mangos and asked, "Do you have a question about mangos?" I said I loved the taste, but wasn't sure about how to pick a ripe one and how to cut it. He immediately felt several mangos, handing them to me, one at a time. He said, "This one is very firm and probably not fully flavored. This one is very soft and is likely to have great flavor if you don't mind a bit of mush! I would pick this one for cutting." I went on to ask about the best way to cut them. He responded, "Most directions tell you to cut long slices parallel to the pit. To keep it simple,



I cut it crosswise around the center and twist." Sorry to say that in the end, in the kitchen, this just doesn't work, but he was right-on concerning good ripeness. His other suggestion was helpful, "If you want an easier solution, try our frozen mango chunks; they're great for recipes like mango salsa."

I said to him, "I remember seeing some nutrition information in the last flyer. Do you still have any copies?"

He responded, "That was the October edition and we're out of copies. The next comes out the first week in February. We promote eating lots of fruits and vegetables and carry many items that might be considered health food or, better said, healthy food, but we really don't talk much about nutrition per-se. We just don't have that level of expertise in every store. A lot of our produce is packaged, and the packages include nutrition information."

The staffer also toured me through the potato section, careful to point out the differences between fluffy and waxy potatoes when using them cooked in salads.

STORE 3:
Tech-Savvy Produce Manager

On a cold, foggy gray Monday afternoon, I pushed my cart into the large, spacious, clean produce department of a national chain in a middle-class neighborhood not far from the University of Washington. Typical shoppers are established middle- to upper-middle class residents and young, hip, highly educated, mobile people involved in college education or first jobs. The store carefully caters to both groups.

Few shoppers strolled the department and a couple of produce staffers were busy stocking displays. I targeted the employee closest to the door to the back room and asked him about kale. He immediately turned, smiled and said, "I've been waiting for someone to ask me that question! Please follow me." He set a rapid pace to the refrigerated vegetable case and I quickly followed, thinking I had selected just the right guy. He was the produce manager, even if he did look about 25 years old.

He said, "I live with my sister's family and we both like to cook. We've been trying lots of ideas with kale and have had a great time doing it. How do you want to use it?"

I told him, "I know some should be cooked, while some can be eaten raw, but I'm not sure which was which."

"My new favorite is to use the Lacinato kale in Caesar Salad," he shared. "I use it just sliced, but my sister steams it for just about a minute; she thinks it gets sweeter and crisper."

"And how does Caesar Salad make kale more nutritious?" I asked. We both laughed and he admitted that many of the recipes they liked best were paired with items like creamy dressings, cooked bacon and other high-fat ingredients. When we looked for nutrition information, he whipped out his Smart phone and googled "kale nutrition."

I looked at him and asked, "There used to be posters, books and other nutritional information available in the department. Is it all gone?"

"There used to be a kiosk of information for shoppers in the department. Sorry to say, that's gone. I'm happy to help shoppers look up information on their phones or mine but it does take more time and is less convenient for consumers. We do miss it."

I wish every supermarket produce department had a produce manager as personable and aware as this guy. **pb**

PHOTO COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS

Four Seasons is among the wholesalers providing merchandising services to retailers.

Wholesalers 'Up' Their Customer Services To Keep Things Moving

Beyond day-to-day buying and selling and what this means to profitability for everyone in the supply chain, the wider economy is creating ripple effects that have led to challenges and opportunities for produce wholesalers. **BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD**

The produce business is like no other when it comes to tough economic times. Matthew D'Arrigo, vice president of D'Arrigo Brothers Co. of NY, Inc., in the Bronx, NY, explains, "Produce operates within its own economics. It doesn't thrive or decline in a good or bad economy. It's supply and demand driven. Markets do their own thing. For example, demand for blueberries has grown exponentially over the past 10 to 15 years, in spite of the recession. Another good example is that when it is 11 degrees outside, demand for fresh produce drops because no one is going out to the supermarket. Yet prices remain high because there's a freeze that has created a shortage. Produce is really its own economic animal."

Money Matters

"The top economic challenges we face as a wholesaler are the same as any well-run wholesaler in any part of the country," says Nathan Stone, chief operating officer of Ben B. Schwartz & Sons, in Detroit, MI. "That is, watching expenses and watching credit. For example, it's easy to let the floor help costs get out of control, especially in a union shop."

The new federal tax hike and its effects are something that Steven Piazza, president of Community-Suffolk, Inc., in Everett, MA, is watching. "That $20 to $30 out of a pay check could easily represent a Friday night dinner.

> **"Produce is really its own economic animal."**
>
> *— Matthew D'Arrigo, D'Arrigo Brothers Co. of NY , Inc.*

This could produce a trickle-down effect, especially to moderate and low price restaurants. There's overall less produce used when restaurants serve less dinners. Also, this could drive chefs to look to other areas. Maybe storage potatoes, parsnips and carrots, for example, which are closer to home and have better pricing and consistency."

However, "easy money" in the form of low interest rates presents an economic opportunity. Says Stone, "It's easy to borrow money now and expand facilities, the fleet and even update technology. For example, we've updated the technology to operate our coolers so they run more efficiently than a decade ago. In the long run, this will save us money."

Ron Carkoski, president and CEO of Four Seasons Produce, Inc., in Ephrata, PA, agrees that the ability to borrow is an important opportunity. "We as wholesalers are asset-strong," he says. "There are trucks, trailers, warehouses, forklifts and more. We need a stable banking environment and the availability of funds at a reasonable rate. This provides the opportunity for acquisitions to develop a deeper business model and for capital improvement in order to maintain relevancy."

Four Seasons built a 240,000-square-foot facility in 2004. Since that time, the lighting system has been completely retrofitted to lower operating costs, and 10 ripening rooms were added along with all new refrigerated

rack storage. The company plans to expand another 55,000 square feet over the next one to two years.

Added Services

One of the chief economic challenges, according to Joel Fierman, president of Fierman Produce Exchange, in the Bronx, NY, is that of getting paid. "There's a need to be extraordinarily careful on credit," he warns. "The risk versus reward isn't as great as it used to be."

Carkoski agrees, adding, "These are tough times and it's tough on businesses. We've seen multi-generational family-owned retail businesses that have decided to close up shop and head into a different realm. As a supplier, it affects us, and it provides us opportunities to serve as well."

Added benefits are one way Fierman courts repeat business from good-paying customers. "With the economy the way it is, it costs more for us as merchants. Delivery isn't a value-added for us, it's a value-subtract. I'm absorbing the cost in order to appeal to a customer with a better pay rating. I don't really have any choice. If I don't do it, someone else will."

Community-Suffolk's Piazza confirms this, too, "We're definitely offering more services, especially for our good customers," he says. "Longer hours, more cross-docking, palletization and delivery."

Economy or not, another challenge for produce wholesalers is retail consolidation, shares Greg Cessna, President and CEO of Pittsburgh, PA-based Consumers Produce Co., Inc. "There's been a lot of consolidation in our area as the independents disappear and the large national chains centralize buying

In Boston Since 1880
Eaton & Eustis Co.
Units 90-92-93-94
New England Produce Center
Chelsea, Massachusetts
617-884-0298 ss
617-884-0678
Fax: 617-884-2611
Anthony Sharrino
Receiver-distributors of
foreign and domestic produce including:
Garlic • Chestnuts • Coconuts • Onions • Peanuts
A Full Line of Nuts and Dried Fruit

FRESH FIDDLEHEADS
1/5/10 lb Bulk
Clamshell Pint/Half Pint
(April - July)
FRESH WILD MAINE BLUEBERRIES
(August - September)
Nationwide Shipping
Ruma
Fruit & Produce Co., Inc.
Boston, MA 02149
800-252-8282
Jim, Mark & Andrea Ruma
sales@rumas.com
www.rumasfiddleheads.com

D'Arrigo
NEW YORK
800-223-8080 • 718-991-5900
www.darrigony.com
Fresh...
...Like It's From
Our Own Backyard

offices," he says. "This has shaken up our customer base. It's also created a different supply structure. We're not the primary supplier to the chain; we supply the shorts instead on demand. That means we have to be nimble, faster on our feet and respond when demand is difficult and this is a challenge."

One way Cessna has turned this situation into advantage is to make his company indispensable by astutely managing the supply chain. "We supply the retailers with what they need, and we manage the perishability," he explains. "We can also repack and service an order the same day. This makes us more valuable as a result."

Retail consolidation has led large chains to have the strength and capability to buy, manage, distribute and market their own produce. Four Seasons' Carkoski says his organization took a strong look at what they

For Over 74 Years...
"Rosebud on the label means quality on the table!"
COMMUNITY SUFFOLK INC.
Offering Full Service...
Repacked Fruits & Vegetables, Foodservice Products
and a Full Line of Fruits & Vegetables from all Producing Areas.
Tommy, Steven, Jack, or David Piazza
Ron Dugas, Chris Rodes, John Michaels,
Mike Patalano or Joe Gelardi
617.389.5200 • fax 617.389.6680
Boston Market Terminal • 304 Second Street • Everett, MA 02149
New England Produce Center • Bays 126/127 • Chelsea, MA 02150
XXXX

Nickey Gregory COMPANY, LLC

Atlanta, GA

Miami, FL

INTRODUCING

primus GFS™

HACCP™ CERTIFIED by Quality Assurance Services

NICKEY GREGORY COMPANY

Forest Park, GA: 404-366-7410 Office • 404-363-1169 Fax

Miami, FL: 305-487-7111 Office • 305-487-7118 Fax

"We as wholesalers are asset-strong. There are trucks, trailers, warehouses, forklifts and more. We need a stable banking environment and the availability of funds at a reasonable rate. This provides the opportunity for acquisitions to develop a deeper business model and for capital improvement in order to maintain relevancy."

— Ron Carkoski, Four Seasons Produce, Inc.

termed 'wholesaler by-pass' in 2006. What this created was a plan to not replace the company's traditional wholesale business, but actually enhance it by looking at where strengths lie and turned these into other businesses. Today, Four Seasons is a family of companies that provide services such as logistics, transport and international sourcing. Carkoski says, "We look to provide the services that will help our retail customers be successful, because that's a win-win for us."

Merchandising expertise is one way wholesalers coast to coast provide essential services to retailers. For example, Four Seasons hired the director of produce from Genuardi's, who, with his staff, keeps customers up to date with current trends and provides technology and other resources for maximizing the profitability of ad programs.

Similarly, Coast Produce Company, based in Los Angeles, CA, also brings merchandising expertise to its retail customers. Mark Morimoto, senior director of sales and business development, details, "We especially work with small independents that don't have a large staff in areas like merchandising sets, point-of-sale, schematics and ad promotions like deals-of-the-day. Independents have an advantage in that they can react faster to opportunity and attract customers. That's why we often see large national chains that are struggling."

PHOTO COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS

Transportation And Logistics

The high cost of transportation isn't helping to grow produce sales, says Fierman Produce Exchange's Fierman. "Consider that when lettuce sells for $6 or $7, transportation can cost $8 to $9 per box," he says. "Most of us are absorbing it. It's difficult to pass on to the consumer. The consumer is price-sensitive, too."

To minimize freight costs, Community-Suffolk's Piazza says it's essential to mix it up on the logistics. "Trucking, freight car and piggyback..." he says. "It's all about manipulating the manifest for greater effectiveness and efficiencies. That means consolidating loads, direct delivery and partial delivery, such as making deliveries along the route to Boston, not just going straight to Boston."

The loss of business from retail consolidation in Southern California has provided Coast Produce an opportunity to work in areas other than strictly supply. "One of these areas," says Coast Produce's Morimoto, "is logistics. We foresee transportation as huge. Moving produce around, especially in a time of transition, such as when a vegetable item moves from northern to southern California or from the Imperial Valley to Yuma, is a vital need," he explains. "It's even more difficult now with

"Trucking, freight car and piggyback... It's all about manipulating the manifest for greater effectiveness and efficiencies. That means consolidating loads, diret delivery and partial delivery, such as making deliveries along to the route to Boston, not just going straight to Boston."

— Steven Piazza, Community-Suffolk, Inc..

"We especially work with small independents that don't have a large staff in areas like merchandising sets, point-of-sale, schematics and ad promotions like deals-of-the-day. Independents have an advantage in that they can react faster to opportunity and attract customers. That's why we often see large national chains that are struggling."

— Mark Morimoto, Coast Produce Company

transportation laws restricting the number of hours a driver can run. As a result, we've seen an opportunity to get distribution of a product from Point A to Point B. This allows us to be a conduit within the supply chain and be able to connect independent retailers to growers of unique products they may not otherwise know about or had access to. This helps both the supplier and buyer."

Similarly, the Four Seasons family of companies includes Sunrise Logistics. Sunrise is a third-party logistics company that works with importers as well as domestic growers on the West Coast who need a place to store product and then manage it on the East Coast. The company operates some 100 trucks that collectively travel 18,000 to 25,000 miles a day. "We are a logistics facilitator," says Carkoski. "We work in liaison with big retailers to transport their products as well as our own wholesale produce. For example, we might have five purchase orders on one truck going to a single distribution center. One might be a Four Seasons product and the other four POs are for other companies' stores. Sunrise is a separate business entity, but it fits in with wholesaling. It's also the fastest growing of our companies."

Earth Source Trading, another company belonging to Four Seasons, is a direct source

shipper with access to retail chains that warehouses produce for offshore suppliers who seek to market and distribute their product on the East Coast.

The opportunity to provide warehouse facilities is something that Coast Produce has capitalized on as well. Morimoto contends, "Large national retailers that own and operate a warehouse are experiencing rising costs and overhead in the form of electricity and healthcare costs of employees, for example. One component of our new Partner Program, which we'll launch in April, is to serve as a third-party warehouse or distribution center for retailers."

The Power Of Technology

Computer technology has taken off over the past five to ten years. Fierman says, "Payables... receivables...they are all at my fingertips. Yet it's hard because a lot of the independent grocers in our region are old-school. They still use manually generated checks. We're cutting-edge, while 60 to 70 percent of the retailers we work with haven't upgraded to computerized systems."

Coast Produce is working with its independent retail customers to show them the benefits of technology. Morimoto points out, "The traditional advantage of the wholesale market was the buyer's ability to walk and talk and touch and feel the product. We're seeing a de-emphasis in this at the Los Angeles Wholesale Market. Now, to keep in touch, we'll be offering the closest thing as part of our new Partner Program. Even the old-school produce guys have Smartphones. We're making it possible for them to upload a live interactive video feed and see what's available and its quality in real-time. This way, they can take advantage of special pricing and just-in-time deals."

Another way produce wholesalers are using technology to grow is through social media. Consumers Produce Co.'s Cessna states, "This is especially true in the area of B2B (business to business). We follow retailers on social media and can therefore better anticipate where they are going, what they will need and where we can be strategic."

Four Seasons Produce has embarked on a five-year program to look at every major information technology function the company now performs and assess it against future needs and wants. Carkoski says, "This is a deep dive on the human resource side, but it's essential to maintain relevancy in this business. Relevancy is more important than simply buying and selling."

Morimoto agrees, adding, "There are always opportunities out there. It's just about finding them. After all, people have to eat and they know produce is healthy." **pb**

The latest salad blends are marketed for health-conscious consumers looking for convenience.

New Salad Blends Offer Something For Everyone

Creative lettuce blends expand the category, offering more than just salads to hungry, health-conscious consumers and restaurant diners. **COMPILED BY JENNIFER KRAMER**

Ready Pac Foods Inc.

Baby Spinach

The Irwindale, CA-based company's best-seller is its Baby Spinach, which outsells its No. 2 best-seller by a margin of 2.5:1. Tristan Simpson, director of marketing and corporate communications, explains, "We focus on excellent quality salads inside the bags, with functional bag design that optimizes freshness and helps consumers shop the salad section. Shoppers look for the variety-specific bold colors of their favorites, and tell us they appreciate that they can see the product freshness before they buy." He adds, "Consumer trends point to growing interest to adding more vegetables in the diet, and I believe that salad blends will ride this wave."

PHOTO COURTESY OF READY PAC FOODS INC.

Earthbound Farm

Zen Blend

Following on the superfoods trend, Earthbound Farm has created Zen Blend, a mix of baby spinach and authentic Asian power greens that include baby kale, red pak choi, red mizuna and komatsuna. More than just a healthy salad, Earthbound's newest blend also makes a great addition to stir-fries, soups or sautéed vegetables. They are pre-washed and ready to eat, with no chopping or de-stemming required.

According to the National Association for the Specialty Foods Trade, sales of organic cooking greens are growing at a staggering rate of 64

PHOTO COURTESY OF EARTHBOUND FARM

percent, which is 8.5 percent times faster than conventional cooking greens. What's more, in 2011, Asian food grew 4.6 percent and is expected to continue its strong growth for the new few years, reaching a total of $1.1 billion in sales. With these two facts in mind, Earthbound's organic Zen Blend is hitting the market at an opportune time.

The company has also added Butter Lettuce Leaves to its line of whole, organic lettuce leaves, perfect for salads and sandwiches and creating lettuce wraps.

Church Brothers

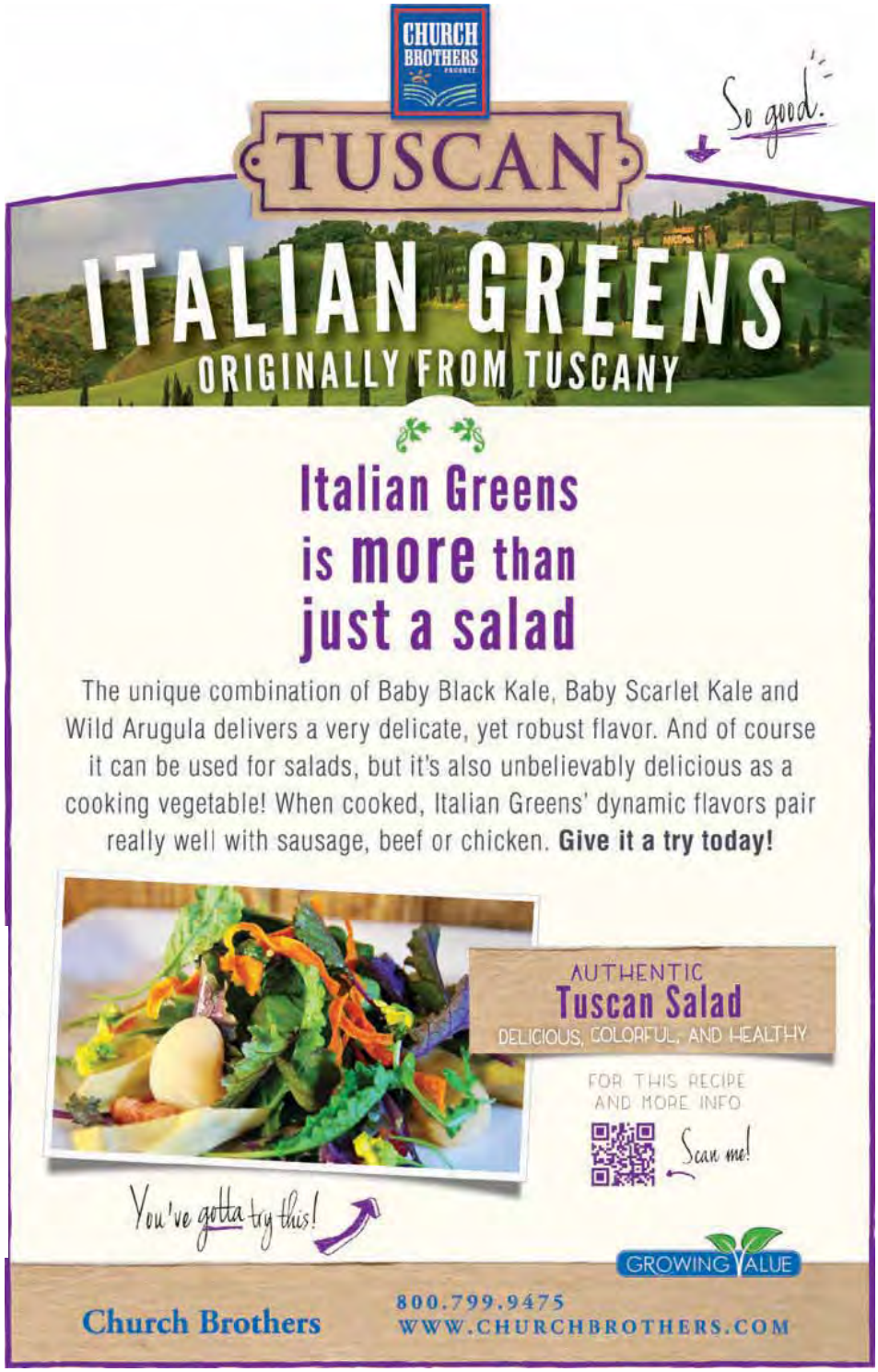
Italian Greens

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHURCH BROTHERS

The new Italian Greens blend by Salinas, CA-based Church Brothers is a combination of black kale, scarlett kale and wild arugula. This mix, which plays on the public's current love affair with kale, provides a delicate, yet robust flavor. Not only for salads, but also a perfect pairing with sausage, beef or chicken, the blend, which is currently only available to foodservice clients, is flying off shelves.

Ernst Van Eeghen, director of marketing and product development, notes, "We hope to enter the retail market later this year. Several companies have already shown an interest. We wanted to create momentum with the item through the foodservice channel first, which will then allow us to increase acreage and volume as we prepare the product to launch at the retail level."

The Italian Greens blend is the latest addition packed under Church Brothers' exclusive Tuscan brand, a high-end product line that already includes Wasabi Arugula, Heirloom Spinach and Heirloom Spinach Blend. **pb**



Southern retail markets themselves are changing, with food retailers making adjustments and more ethnic independent markets sprouting up.

A Roundup Of Southern Retailers

More changes coming to southern retailing. **BY BARBARA ROBISON**

That change is inevitable has long been recognized. It also is known that change will be enthusiastically embraced by some and barely acknowledged or thoroughly disliked by others. Such is the case with produce retailing in the southern part of the United States. Some areas of the South, particularly the urban regions, are seeing changes in many aspects of produce retailing, while in other more rural areas, there may be some changes, but most consumers are happy to purchase the popular traditional southern produce items they always have.

Southern retail markets themselves are changing, with food retailers making adjustments and more ethnic independent markets sprouting up. Bill Bishop, founder of Barrington, IL-state based Willard Bishop Consulting, LLC, and chief architect of Brick Meets Click, a resource for retailers, suppliers and technology providers, offers an excellent overview of retail moves in the South. "There are several major market moves that will have implications for produce sales. Publix, an outstanding retailer, is spreading its wings and moving north from Florida, and new leadership at Bi-Lo/Winn-Dixie, following the merger, will provide more changes," he details. "Also on the radar is the growth of Aldi's in the South. They have been in the United States for 35 years and are becoming increasingly competitive, with extraordinary retail prices. Their new stores are brighter and cleaner, with an increased amount of SKUs. The produce is less expensive than most markets with pretty good quality, appealing to many budget-minded consumers," he reveals.

"Produce usage in the Southeast continues to be strong," shares Gary Myracle, executive director of produce field procurement for Associated Wholesale Grocers, Inc., based in Kansas City, KS. "Mainstream items are popular, but some items are more popular there than in other parts of the country. For example, greens are a great southern cooking item for many consumers, as is okra. Boiled 'B' size potatoes are popular with people along the Gulf Coast."

Changing Customer Demographics Bring New Availability And Usage

"Changes in produce item availability and usage are occurring more in the urban regions of the South, where the colleges, universities and higher tech industries are located," comments Don Harris, founder of Harris Consulting Solutions, headquartered in Boulder, CO. "Many of the consumers are new to those areas, many are from foreign countries, and they seek out the foods with which they are most familiar."

Retailers are recognizing this and thus, produce departments reflect the needs of the various regions. "We definitely try to match the produce items we carry in our stores with the customer demographics of each of our stores," says Michael Purvis, director of produce merchandising for Harveys Supermarket, a Nashville, GA-based chain with 73 units. "Some stores will have more produce that fits current trends than others, while others have produce for traditional southern cooking. For example, in south Georgia we've had a Hispanic population for years and in those area stores, we carry whatever is needed, such as plantains, and various Chile peppers."

The growth of ethnic populations throughout the South has had an impact on what produce retailers are offering. More Hispanics have moved into the Hattiesburg, MS area, and Stan Harvey, owner of two Big Star Supermarkets, based in Many, LA, reports their produce offerings have changed some. "Cilantro is big now, and avocados and melons of all kinds have increased in sales," he reports.

According to Andrew Scott, sales and procurement manager for Forest Park, GA-based General Produce, Inc., a produce wholesale supplier, "Many Asian formats have

come to the Southeast and done very well, especially Korean 'Super Marts' that are very large stores with a diverse variety of goods offered. These large format stores also sub-lease space inside their stores to independent vendors. It's been a pretty successful concept here in the Atlanta marketplace," he shares.

Don Robinson, account manager for W. Newell & Co., headquartered in Champaign, IL, thinks the produce mix remains pretty close to the same it's always been in the South. "The South is still a strong potato and onion market because these items go a long way on the dinner table," he explains. "Cabbage and greens dominate the market as well. There is, however, a wide variety of inner city stores that are quite diverse. There is an increased growth in Asian retailers and some continued growth in Hispanic markets," he adds. "I do think we are seeing more and more independents increasing their Hispanic sections throughout the stores to capture this very loyal customer. Stores are doing this in many departments throughout the store with grocery and produce departments being the biggest areas impacted."

The South is seeing a dynamic growth of ethnic produce items available to consumers and an increase in independent ethnic markets, according to Bishop of Willard Bishop Consulting.

Fewer changes in produce offerings seem to be occurring in Mississippi and Alabama, where the traditional southern cuisine reigns and ethnic populations have not increased as they have in other southern regions. More changes in produce variety are occurring in Louisiana, especially in the New Orleans area. In other areas of the South, the No. 1 ethnic cuisine is Hispanic, with Asian coming in second, as the popularity of the cuisines move north from Florida. Offerings of Thai items are growing and in Jacksonville, FL, a hot spot of different cuisines, produce items used in Indian cuisine have become more popular, as well, observes Harris of Harris.

Locally Grown Produce A Hit In The South

The locally grown produce movement continues to grow across the United States, including the South. Everyone seems to agree that "home-grown" or "locally grown" is a trend in produce shopping that is taking off in the South. "Home grown produce does very well in this market," acknowledges Robinson. "Even though conditions may not always be as strong as some other growing areas, the customers really like the taste of the locally grown products and many times will pay more for the product."

Myracle of Associated Wholesale Grocers points out, "Strawberries grown in Louisiana and Florida are a big hit, along with sweet corn and peaches from Alabama. Satsumas from Louisiana are popular, too, with people along the Gulf Coast, and there are many items in Florida that consumers call 'locally grown.'"

"We would buy more locally grown produce because our customers really like it, but supplies are limited," laments Harvey of Big Star Supermarkets. "Our No. 1 item is bananas, and our big items are still the everyday ones like lettuce, tomatoes, cabbage and potatoes. We also sell a lot of fresh fruit."

One of the reasons for the growth of the locally grown produce items is because there has been an expansion of produce crops produced in the South. Scott of General Produce describes what's been happening: "We are seeing more and more traditional West Coast commodities being grown in the Southeast, including broccoli, cauliflower, Romaine, lettuce, peaches from Florida and even

"Changes in produce item availability and usage are occurring more in the urban regions of the South, where the colleges, universities and higher tech industries are located. Many of the consumers are new to those areas, many are from foreign countries, and they seek out the foods with which they are most familiar."

— Don Harris, Harris Consulting Solutions

Mandarins in Louisiana. Different seed varieties and growing practices have advanced this in the Southeast," he explains.

The growth of the berry industry, especially blueberries, is an example of produce items that have expanded production in the South, according to Harris of Harris Consulting Solutions.

Scott compliments the area retailers for being big supporters of the Georgia Grown program promoted by the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and positioning items such as peaches, cucumbers, squash, beans, cabbage and corn in their ads when in season. "One large retailer here will have pictures in the produce departments of the actual Georgia farmers whose products they are purchasing," says Scott. "The farmer and the retailer are becoming true partners in these ads. It's a great visual for the consumer to see a picture of a farmer in the produce department."

"We take pride in being a supporter of the Georgia Grown and the Fresh From Florida programs put on by the State Departments of Agriculture," states Purvis of Harveys Supermarket. "About 150 of us just came together at a symposium to discuss the upcoming Georgia Grown program and how we can help support it. We plan to expand our promotions to 30 stores and will be tagging all the stores. Being a Georgia-based company, we like to go to farms and meet the growers and have a better understanding of their industry. We know our customers value the freshness of the regionally grown produce we offer. We feel we are not only helping them, but we are also recognizing the economic importance of agriculture in our state. Our customers appreciate that, too."

Homegrown produce is very popular with customers of Ingles Supermarkets, Inc., an Asheville, NC-based chain with 203 stores. Jim Ray, vice president of produce, says, "We like the fact that more locally grown items are available. Nutrition and healthy eating are also important to our customers, and the demand for kale has increased dramatically. It is now the No. 1 green we sell."

Organic Produce Winning More Southern Fans

Organic produce is receiving much greater acceptance by consumers in the South. This is probably due to many reasons, but certainly one is due to greater local availability. "You are seeing a growing trend of organics being locally grown and sold directly to restaurants and retail stores, cutting out the warehouse/distribution channel of the supply chain," says General Produce's Scott. "The produce is being brought directly to the stores from the farmer/growers."

For many years, the demographics for those purchasing organic and natural foods were presumed to be mostly well-educated people who typically lived in urban areas or college towns. Today, however, this demographic model falls far short of the organic food shopper. One of the fastest growing segments of the population purchasing organic foods is the Hispanic community, and this is being played out in the Southeast, according to Simcha Weinstein, director of marketing for Albert's Organics, Inc., based in Bridgeport, NJ.

"One of the strongest, certainly fastest growing markets for organic farming is located in the Southeast, particularly in the Carolinas," reports Weinstein. "One of the reasons is that these are states with fewer cities and more land mass available for agriculture. Additionally, the land is much less expensive than many places out West or in the Northeast, allowing growers to either lease more land or buy significant acreage. Also, there are four very clear and distinct seasons available, which is attractive and beneficial to growers. I live in Asheville, NC, with a population of about 65,000, and we have two large natural food stores and a cooperative, all of which do quite well," he continues. "Additionally, Whole Foods is scheduled to open a store here in another year. We are neither a college town nor a highly

"Magazines like *Southern Living* and TV programs showing the ins and outs of Southern cooking, like Paula Dean's, have had a strong influence on what people have on their plates,"

— Gary Myracle, Associated Wholesale Grocer

populated city, yet our per capita expenditure on organic food is probably one of the highest in the country."

Ingles Supermarkets is answering the call for more organic produce by adding a number of organic items, especially in the fresh greens category, according to the company's Ray.

Moreover, "There are a lot more organic blueberry growers in Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina and Kentucky, making it easier for southern retailers to offer them to their customers," suggests Harris of Harris Produce Solutions.

Consumer Media Influences Southern Produce Shoppers

TV cooking shows, blogs and a myriad of food publications have had an impact on the way consumers are shopping today. This includes those living in the South, where more people are trying items that have been around for a long time, but food shoppers hadn't been purchasing. "Thanks to cooking shows, items like the hard squashes, especially butternut, along with fennel and cilantro have become popular," reports Robinson of W. Newell. "Southern home-style cooking is a big deal in the South and many cooking shows are geared to that audience."

"Magazines like *Southern Living* and TV programs showing the ins and outs of Southern cooking, like Paula Dean's, have had a strong influence on what people have on their plates," adds Myracle of Associated Wholesale Grocers.

"TV shows and cooking publications have had a large impact on our customers," reports Ray of Ingles Supermarkets. "Sometimes, the business can be sporadic because a show will demonstrate the use of a produce item and we are not prepared for the consumer demand. Butternut squash is one item for which we've seen increased requests. We're also expanding our offerings of the nut category and fresh juices."

"Demands for hard squashes, such as butternut, are more popular because of TV shows and cooking magazines," explains Jerry Havel, director of sales and marketing for Fresh Farms, in Nogales, AZ. "The squash is frequently featured in soups, pasta dishes and even baby foods. Restaurants that feature the squashes have increased consumer usage, too. We'll be importing squashes into the United States until June."

"Apple sales on new varieties have increased, too, as more southern consumers learn about them," points out Robinson. "Honey Crisp sales continue to grow in the category, along with proprietary varieties like Jazz and Autumn Glory. Products grown in hot houses are also experiencing a sales growth."

There is some discussion about Atlanta becoming a location for the growth of urban agriculture and hydroponics, suggests Bishop of Willard Bishop. It appears to be primarily limited to restaurants at this point, but "from an environmental point of view, it could be an exciting area to watch." **pb**

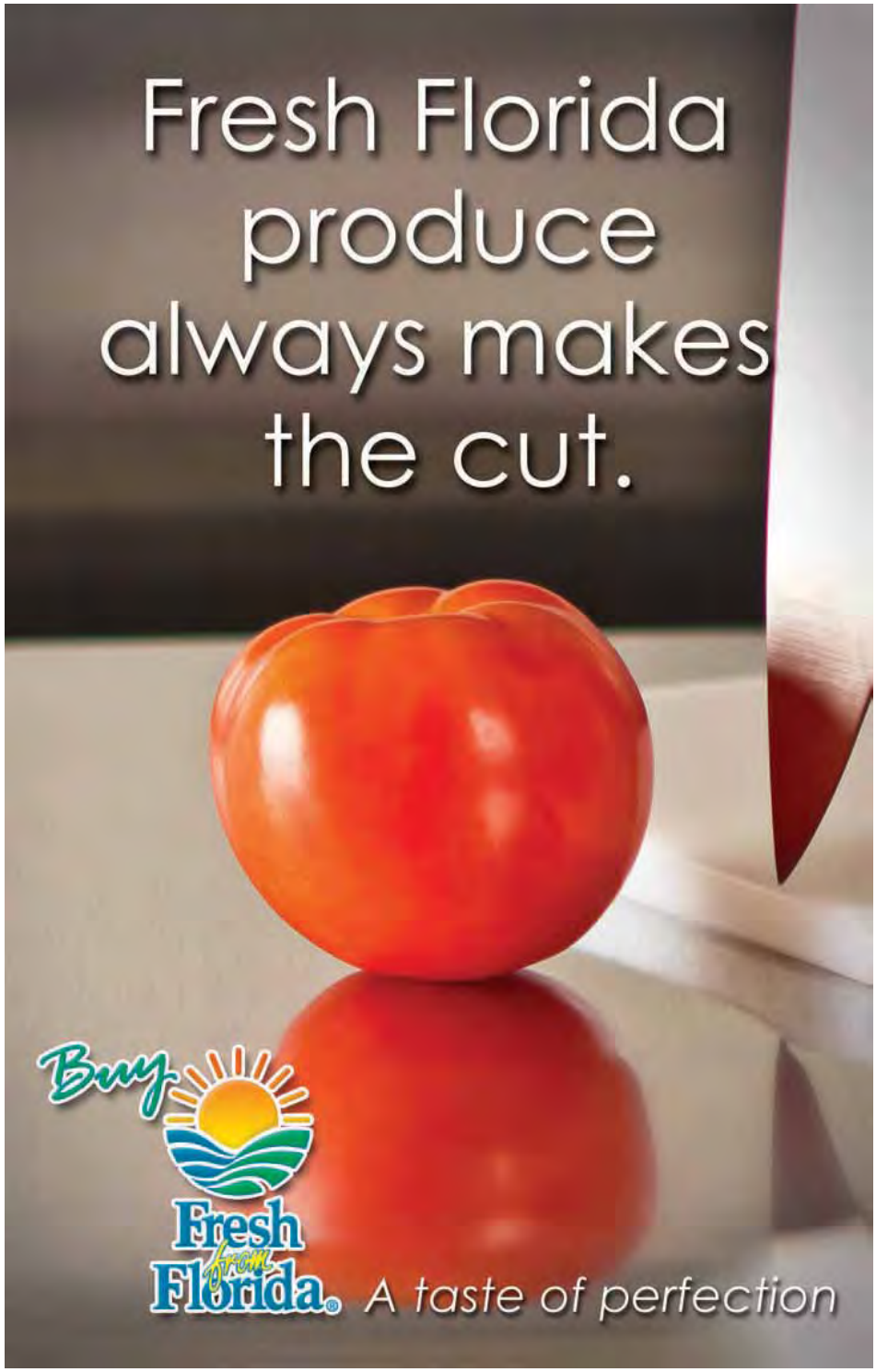


PHOTO COURTESY OF LIPMAN PRODUCE

No one would expect to find a consensus on the controversial topic of protected agriculture and greenhouse-grown produce, especially in the produce industry.

Open-And-Closed Case: Greenhouse Standard Debate Continues

Supermarket produce executives, industry experts and government overseers shed light on buying strategies and bottom line issues surrounding protected agriculture versus traditional greenhouse. **BY MIRA SLOTT**

Is there a need for a national, greenhouse-grown standard and federally enforced regulations? Getting to the answer requires delving into its relevance at the retailer and consumer levels. It also requires analysis on a greater scale that includes more questions, such as:

• Does it matter in retail purchasing decisions whether product is grown in a traditional enclosed greenhouse environment or under the protected agriculture umbrella?

• Do retailers even set greenhouse-grown buying specifications?

• Could buyers be mistaking protected agriculture product for greenhouse-grown?

• Is there any definitive evidence to suggest significant differences in quality, shelf-life and shrink?

• And, perhaps most importantly, does the consumer care?

The Need To Know

No one would expect to find consensus on the controversial topic of protected agriculture and greenhouse-grown produce, especially in the produce industry, which is rich in dynamic personalities, passionate views, and varying customer bases and business strategies. Yet, surprisingly, retailers came together on the answer to one particular question: How important is a greenhouse-grown label in consumer purchases?

"The consumer is not analyzing whether product is greenhouse-grown or not," says Joseph Burnett, director of produce and floral at Associated Grocers in Baton Rouge, LA. "I don't know any consumers, at least in our marketing area, saying they are looking for greenhouse-grown products. I go to a lot of stores and to my competitors, and I've never seen anyone play up greenhouse-grown. As a wholesaler, I get very few requests for greenhouse from the store-end. We're looking for quality and a good value for consumers."

Paul Kneeland, vice president of produce and floral at Kings Food Markets, a 26-unit chain, based in Parsippany, NJ, acknowledges, "I definitely think greenhouse-grown product has relevance in the marketplace, but do consumers realize it's greenhouse grown? I don't think so. They want quality product, however it's grown," he says. "When we do market in-store, we call it greenhouse-grown or hothouse and never get any questions on it."

Kneeland admits that his company hasn't done a good job saying what greenhouse-grown is, but it hasn't been on the company's priority list. "Consumers don't seem to care," he says. "Our consumers will pay for good

Editor's Note: This is the second part of a two-part story. Please see Part I in the February issue of Produce Business.

Certified Greenhouse

Defined. Audited. Trusted.

With the **Certified Greenhouse** seal, you know you are getting the "best of the best" greenhouse vegetables in terms of consistent quality, food safety and measured sustainability.

Our farmers meet a strict definition for greenhouse growing and credible sustainability standards that are audited by SCS Global Services, an independent third party.

SCS Global Services individually certifies our more than 30 greenhouse farmers in North America for structural and environmental controls, water resource management, pest management, plant nutrition management, ecosystem management and integrated waste management. All of this is backed by transparency and published standards you can trust.

Certified Greenhouse—The Best of the Best

CertifiedGreenhouse.com

"I don't know any consumers, at least in our marketing area, saying they are looking for greenhouse-grown products. I go to a lot of stores and to my competitors, and I've never seen anyone play up greenhouse-grown. As a wholesaler, I get very few requests for greenhouse from the store-end."

— Joseph Burnett, Associated Grocers

quality, and absolutely pay a premium for it. From a retail perspective, we may be paying a little bit more up front, but on the back end, shrink is down when we upgrade to a hot house or greenhouse program."

According to a produce director at a Midwest supermarket chain, who asked to remain anonymous, "What does it really mean to the customers? That's the question. I'm not an expert on greenhouse, but I tend to side with the Mexican protected agriculture growers," he says. "I want a really safe product that looks good and tastes good. We have one of the best tomato sets, and the only thing we don't carry is field-grown Florida tomatoes that have no flavor. We're carrying UglyRipes, but when it comes to greenhouse-grown, whether it's open in Mexico or enclosed in California, the customer doesn't really care. Consistency in quality is an operational issue and that is important. The only time of year when that matters is when local product is on the shelves, and we all know it's not necessarily better," he concludes.

According to a produce and floral director at a West Coast supermarket chain, who preferred his comments not be attributed to him because of the topic's controversy, "I'll be honest with you... I've never had a customer call me, or pass on a question to a produce manager about whether or not these items are greenhouse-grown. I'm not convinced it's important to the customer. I have not found value in marketing greenhouse. That doesn't mean it won't say hothouse on the product, but our customers don't seem to purchase that way," he shares, adding that in his company, probably about 20 percent of the product is pure greenhouse in the traditional sense.

What's In A Name?

Any action by the USDA to propose a greenhouse definition must consider the broad interest of individuals or an industry involved in manufacturing, producing, packaging, distributing, testing, consuming, or using the product; or the interest of a federal, state or local agency, says Gwen Sparks, spokesperson for USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, in Washington, D.C. "Presently, there are specific grade standards for greenhouse tomatoes, leaf lettuce, and cucumbers," she clarifies. "These quality standards, however, do not define the term greenhouse. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has been contacted by industry representatives to consider how that definition should be developed, but we have not yet determined a timeline for the completion of this process."

According to Reggie Brown, manager of the Maitland-based Florida Tomato Committee, there is a definition of greenhouse produce that the government is using in the current Tomato Suspension Agreement being considered. "The Mexican industry did not want [that definition] to be called greenhouse," says Brown. "The sensible approach is that it is synonymous."

"We have been aligned with the [Fresno, CA-based]Certified Greenhouse Farmers group in the United States and Canada, and we work through trade challenges with Mexican imports," continues Brown. "The Certified Greenhouse Farmers put through a definition of greenhouse basically as a system using high-tech, climate-controlled, hydroponically grown in artificial media and in a permanently enclosed structure." And, according to Brown, that definition is part of the recent Suspension Agreement put forward, but not designated by the word greenhouse.

Eric Viramontes, former CEO of Culiacan, Sinoloa-based Asociacion Mexicana de Horticulture Protegida A.C (AMHPAC), sees it this way: "I think the USDA has the right definition of protected ag and greenhouse," he says. "Greenhouse is any vegetable grown indoors. I see a standard being developed. We have to make sure it doesn't create a problem, but it's really not a priority. I'm disappointed to have to be spending so much time on it. The North American industry wants the definition to be more narrowly defined, by adding all these qualifiers to exclude shade-house-grown and hybrids."

The industry has allowed too much confusion surrounding technology, says Viramontes. "Technology should not even be a subject to bring up," he asserts. "It's about competitive edge, what moves are being made to be a better grower and the decision of the grower to bring better product to the consumer. The discussion should be about using the right means to meet the requirements of consumers, not about having the most components, like cars that have the best stereo, air conditioner, leather seats, etc."

Viramontes says his best effort is to explain to the consumer which technology delivers the best quality, safest product, and security in a way that is most affordable for consumers. "If someone wants to tell consumers to pay more because the product is grown in a snowy area, that's fine," he states. "To me, promoting greenhouses with controlled environment is marketing strategy."

"It does not mean anything to me if it's greenhouse grown or a protected agriculture product," says the West Coast retailer. "With tomatoes, what matters is flavor... is it at the

"Traditional closed environment is the distinction in quality, but I've seen product coming out of hybrid greenhouses comparable to closed environments. If I were choosing, from a quality thermometer, the enclosed greenhouse would have the best quality, hybrids next at very good quality, and shadehouse third on the list."

— Paul Kneeland, Kings Food Markets

right ripeness stage? Do the Brix levels make it taste good? The biggest complaint from consumers is tomatoes lack flavor and taste like cardboard. If it meets our specs, that's what we are looking for," he adds.

That sentiment is echoed by other retailers. "We have specs for the tomatoes we purchase, and those specs don't necessarily apply to a greenhouse. It comes down to quality, sizing and value," says the produce director at the Midwest chain.

Is A Standard For Greenhouse Necessary?

"I think greenhouse growers are making more of this than needs to be made," the Midwest retailer continues. "We buy from the people we trust. We don't care whether it's greenhouse-grown in a traditional way; that is not our criteria. I don't see a need for a unified standard, at least not at this point. One must ask: Is it being pushed by California greenhouse growers, who have certain regulations and costs, in order to create competitive neutrality?"

"I suppose a standard could be good for industry control, but I'm not sure how necessary it is from my perspective," says Kings' Kneeland. "Quality-wise, I can tell right away what is grown in a greenhouse; the quality is very consistent, and usually superior to field-house, whether tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers or lettuces. A lot of times it's cleaner, without a lot of blemishes because it is protected in the enclosed environment from windburn and ends up coming out higher quality in the end."

"But is it as clear-cut to see the quality difference between greenhouse and the range of technologies under the protected agriculture umbrella?" asks Kneeland. "My first answer is traditional closed environment is the distinction in quality, but I've seen product coming out of hybrid greenhouses comparable to closed environments. If I were choosing, from a quality thermometer, the enclosed greenhouse would have the best quality, hybrids next at very good quality, and shadehouse third on the list."

The buyers at Kings ask the right questions, says Kneeland. "If the people we buy from say it's greenhouse, it's greenhouse. We don't get duped."

However, according to industry retail veteran, Dick Spezzano, president of Spezzano Consulting Service, based in Monrovia, CA, "Buyer beware. Remember that old expression among salesmen, 'There are no ugly sisters.' With no greenhouse standard, the leeway exists to mislead retail buyers," he contends.

"Growers lie all the time, and salesmen lie all the time," Spezzano continues. "You could

have 10 loads of greenhouse product and 10 loads of protected agriculture product side-by-side and they look the same and you can't tell the difference. It's pretty darn close if someone does a good job packaging. You can't tell by the box. Right now, the protected agriculture box could say greenhouse. From a buyer point of view, you'd be overpaying. If there is a standard, buyers can be more aware of what they are getting."

"We work with a re-packer, and his job is to give us the best quality and consistency with the specs we require, whether it's greenhouse or not," says the produce director at the West Coast retailer. "Could there be a possibility that we could get protected agriculture product instead of greenhouse and not realize it? That's not typically the way our suppliers would do business. People who grow in a traditional enclosed greenhouse segregate their product."

Could there ever be field-grown and shade-grown sold together? That could happen, say retailers, especially in certain times of the year when product may be mixed. "We are not concerned we will be paying for greenhouse when it's not because the vendors we get greenhouse from only do traditional greenhouse," says the West Coast retailer.

A number of years ago, a greenhouse standard was a moot point, says Spezzano, but the retail market has seen an influx of greenhouse and protected agriculture product and an exodus of field-grown more and more over to foodservice. "Mexico is such a huge factor now with its protected agriculture industry," he adds.

Is there a case for greenhouse branding? According to Spezzano, "Consumers don't know the difference and you'd be spending a lot of money to tell them. They know good taste and bad taste. Whether a greenhouse label for consumers will make a difference — that's a marketing decision the Certified Greenhouse Farmers must decide if it's worth the investment."

According to Burnett of Associated Grocers, "We carry [Eatontown, NJ-based] Village Farms, which will do the counts and fit our particular specs with tomatoes on the vine, where we want a certain bag, etc., but as far as the rest of it goes, we do bring in colored peppers from Mexico and it would be the same specs as Village Farms. On hothouse tomatoes, we do want stores to know they are buying greenhouse, but on colored peppers it doesn't matter. We'll pick up deals on peppers from Mexico with assorted color mixes."

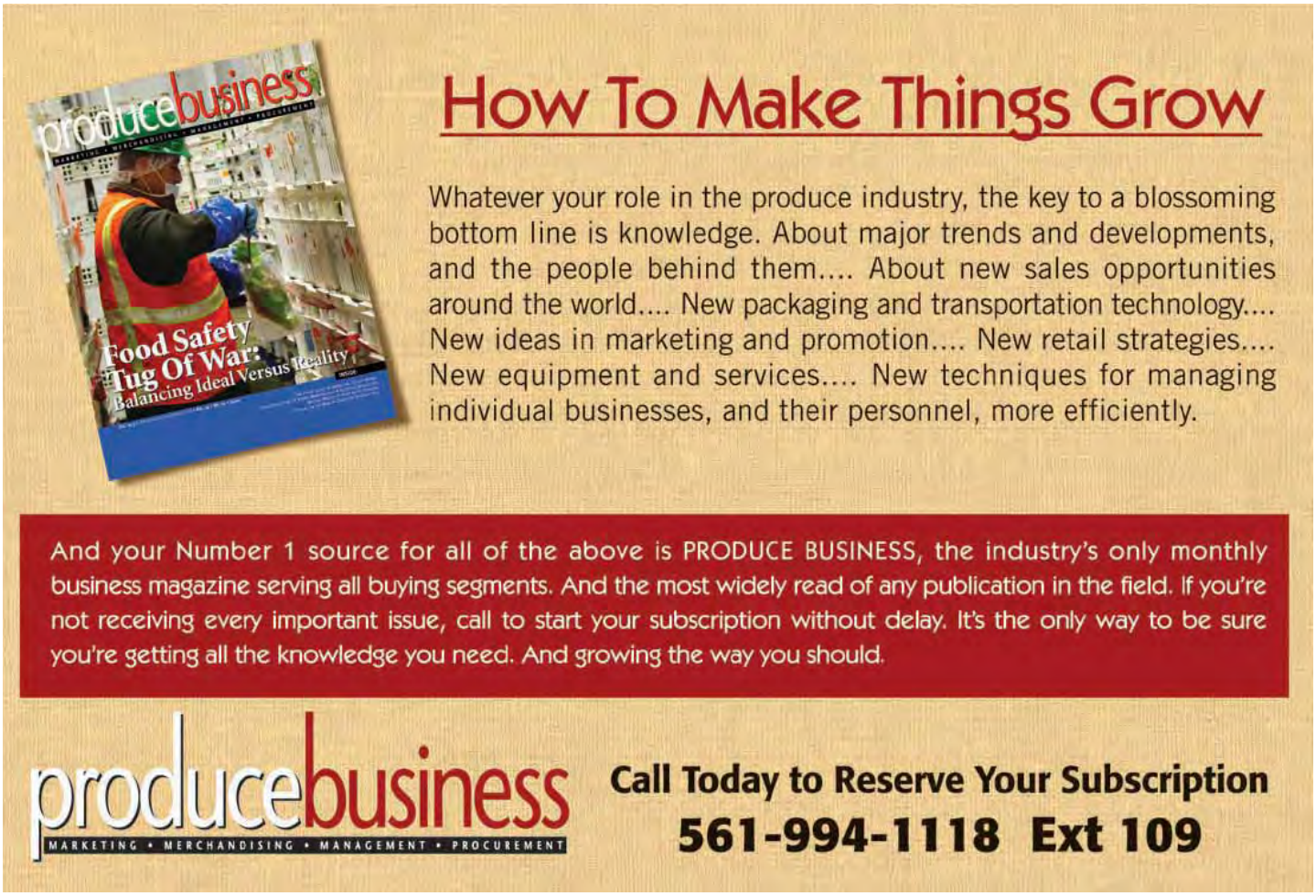
Burnett claims that greenhouse is certainly much more uniform than field-grown, but from greenhouse- to shade-house-grown, there is not as much of a difference. "Shade-house-grown are still good peppers, but maybe just not as uniform," states Burnett. "I'm certainly not going to say there is no value in a certified greenhouse standard; if the demographic was there, maybe there would be an interest, However, I personally don't see a need. If our supplier says it is greenhouse, we know what we're getting."

Spezzano says, "At the end of the day, it's about the marketplace. If you make the distinction, and greenhouse growers can't sell the product at the premium, they drop the price, and if they can't compete they change strategies or will be forced to close down.

However, Brown of the Florida Tomato Committee takes a stronger stance on the ethics of marketing greenhouse-grown versus protected ag products at retail: "The question is: Are retailers willing to defraud their customers or deliver honest product to customers?"

Price Considerations

Does greenhouse-grown product warrant a premium over protected agriculture product?



How does it compare in quality, safety, and consistency? Does it prolong shelf-life and reduce shrink? "Greenhouse product is increasing, but mainly because the cost has come down; greenhouse is beautiful, it looks like it comes out of a mold it's so consistent," says Burnett. "It's a little higher priced, but the tradeoff is greatly reduced shrink at retail, and our stores are very much aware of this."

According to Spezzano, the difference between protected agriculture and greenhouse-grown product comes down to costs and ultimately prices to consumers. "Greenhouses are enclosed and are temperature-controlled, generally made of glass, have a very expensive infrastructure with a controlled climate. Then you have shadehouses, or what they like to be called — protected ag — where they use ribbing and plastic, which have no climate-control and can't add heat or cool what's inside. You can pull the shade up to allow more light in, or put the shade down to protect product from harsh sun, winds, dust, rain, etc.," adds Spezzano. "Shade houses offer some protection, but not like a greenhouse. There's a bigger cost investment to greenhouses, which require energy and light."

Ultimately, Spezzano says marketers of greenhouse product would be spending a lot of money to tell the consumer that greenhouses are pesticide-free, for example, which is a great selling point to a shopper's sensitivity to pesticide use. Unfortunately, in produce, retailers usually won't give consumers a choice between similar products grown in the two environments. "It is very unusual for protected ag products and hothouse products with the same size to be merchandised at retail that way," says Spezzano.

According to Viramontes, "I would love to see consumers paying higher prices for higher tech. That would be awesome, but as a marketer, I have to understand what the consumer wants: high quality. The consumer doesn't care if the product is grown in grass, with artificial light, or in a climate-controlled environment. At the end of the day, I think the consumer is going to be more worried about how big the carbon footprint is in the environment, and whether we are being safe responsible... that's what the consumer is interested in."

Study This

While there are plenty of anecdotal stories according to many of the retailers and advisors contacted for this article, it behooves the industry to conduct more extensive research in this area to better understand the merits of a national, unified greenhouse standard with federally regulated and enforced guidelines.

When asked, retailers quickly distinguish between field-grown and greenhouse-grown characteristics, yet are decidedly less assured when comparing the merits of greenhouse grown to the range of protected agriculture products on the market. "In the tomato category, there has always traditionally been high volume and high shrink, and shrink has decreased dramatically since the influx of greenhouse and protected agriculture product," says Spezzano, who adds that product is so superior in both these technologies compared to field grown from a retailer view.

"The crux of why companies such as Costco got out of field-grown is related to shrink," notes Spezzano. "I have seen evidence that greenhouse-grown product has longer shelf-life than field-grown — significantly so — but I can't say one way or the other for protected agriculture. Greenhouse growers say they don't want to be lumped into the protected agriculture group. It would be helpful to prove scientifically whether different methods are better or worse." **pb**

Many in the trucking industry are pointing fingers at the hardline rules of California, which are making it more expensive for cross-country trips.

Top Trucking Industry Concerns

Intrusive government rules and regulations top the list of complaints. **BY BILL MARTIN**

Government intrusion with excessive rules and regulations at both the state and federal level is resulting in higher transportation costs, which ultimately means retailers and other buyers in the produce industry are paying more to have fresh fruits and vegetables delivered. At least this seems to be the consensus of many involved with produce transportation.

Easily topping the list of concerns is the state of California, which implemented new rules affecting not only trucking equipment, but also its owners and anyone who does business with them. A modification in the hours of service rules at the federal level coming this summer also is raising concerns about how it may adversely affect service provided by trucking companies. And, there are still complaints about the produce industry's delays at shipping point and destination regarding loading and unloading.

California CARB Rules

For better or worse, California grows and ships about half of the nation's fresh fruits and vegetables. However, with each passing year, doing business in the Golden State is not becoming any easier. If in doubt, just ask anyone doing business there about the California Resources Board (CARB) rules, which went into effect January 1st.

LaCanada, CA-based Allen Lund Co. has over 30 offices in more than 20 states arranging 280,000-plus loads a year of produce, other refrigerated products, plus flatbed and dry freight. Vice president Kenny Lund says less than 30 percent of trucks are in compliance with CARB rules. "It costs $8,000 to $20,000 to retrofit a refrigeration unit, or buy one new to comply with the California regulations," he reveals. "The truckers simply don't have the money to do it."

Paul Kazan, president of Target Interstate Systems Inc., a Bronx, NY-based truck broker

"The shippers don't care about the fact the trucker arrives at a dock and has to wait four hours to get loaded, nor does anyone consider the fact that the trucker arrives at Hunts Point and it takes 10 hours to get unloaded."

— Paul Kazan, Target Interstate

who arranges about 15,000 loads of produce and dry freight a year, notes, "Eighty percent of the time I try to qualify a carrier to comply with California laws, he will not pass. If everyone was to stay true to the rules, we would be able to load produce truckers in California."

Jimmy DeMatteis, president of Des Moines Truck Brokers, in Norwalk, IA, takes an even stronger point of view, saying, "The state of California has a lack of knowledge about our industry and doesn't even care about learning it." As an example, if DeMatteis hires a truck and then it is pulled over by California authorities and found to be non-compliant, not only can the truck driver be fined $1,000, but the fine can also be levied against the motor carrier, shipper, receiver and the truck broker, basically anyone who is involved in the transaction.

Doug Stoiber, vice president of produce transportation operations for Raleigh, NC-based L&M Transportation Services, Inc., agrees all parties in the transaction should be fined, unless they have a written certification from the carrier that it is in compliance with CARB rules, one of which states that the refrigeration unit on the trailer must be a 2007 model or newer.

L&M works at the direction of either the shipper or buyer, Stoiber notes, to arrange the load. The carrier picks up the load in California, which was arranged by the North Carolina broker, for delivery to the receiver in, say, Virginia. "But what happens if the load was sold on a delivered basis to the customer in Virginia and the shipper in California says he hired us (L&M) to haul this load since as we (L&M) expected you to do your due diligence in getting a CARB-certified carrier. If you didn't do that," Stoiber relates, "it's your problem, not ours, and we expect you to pay this fine if you expect to continue doing business with us."

Continuing, Stoiber states, "Likewise, if it's one of our customers on the East Coast that bought a load FOB and hired us to get the transportation, if that carrier shows up at the dock in Salinas and the CARB officer says we have a non-compliant trailer, the officer will fine us and our customer. Our customer will expect us to pay the fine, since they entrusted us to do this business right. As long as there are bureaucrats looking to justify their existence, there will be increasing regulations,"

According to Robert Goldstein, president of the Newark, NJ-based Genpro, Inc., the rules and regulations like those in California have consequences. "It makes it difficult for the smaller truck operators, which makes up a large component for hauling," he explains. "This adversely affects freight capacity because

TRANSPORTATION SPECIALISTS SINCE 1969
DMTB
Des Moines TRUCK BROKERS INC
"Driven to serve one load at a time"
Specializing in perishable commodities
Serving U.S. & Canada
NASTC 2009 National Broker of the Year.
XXXX
$250,000
****
800-247-2514
515-981-5115 • Fax: 515-981-0923
P.O. Box 337 • Norwalk, IA 50211
www.dmtb.com

The Perishable Specialist Inc.
Frank A. Ramos
T 305.477.9906
F 305.477.9975
C 305.986.1969
E frank@theperishablespecialist.com
9831 N.W. 58th Street, Unit 131
Miami, Florida 33178
CUSTOMS BROKER
theperishablespecialist.com

"Safe carriers are being rated as unsafe. Shippers are putting things in contracts based on CSA scores that blacklist many good, small trucking companies. Carriers have been put out of business because shippers or brokers won't work with them once they are deemed unsafe by these scores."

— Jimmy DeMatteis, Des Moines Truck Brokers

of the difficulties in being compliant. People are realizing they are going to have to make the investment for updating their equipment."

DeMatteis at Des Moines Truck Brokers agrees. For example, even though CARB rules have been around since 2004, they have upped the ante with New Year rules implemented by CARB. He points out now there is a requirement for 53-ft. long trailers to have "the right kind of tires." That trailer also must have "wings" on the bottom on each side for aerodynamic purposes. As for the reefer unit, besides not being any older than seven years, it has to be registered with the state of California, whether the carrier is domiciled in that state or not.

Lund of Allen Lund Co. agrees, stating engines on refrigerated units are designed to last 14 years. "The state of California is taking one-half of the life away from their engines. We are going to see higher transportation costs as a result," he states.

Federal Rules And Regulations Condemned

DeMatteis, who serves on the executive committee of The Alliance for Safe, Efficient Competitive Truck Transportation, does so because its main focus is addressing "all the fallacies and flaws in CSA-2010." In a nutshell, CSA is administered by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), which rates the safety of motor carriers. "Safe carriers are being rated as unsafe," asserts DeMatteis. "Shippers are putting things in contracts based on CSA scores that blacklist many good, small trucking companies. Carriers have been put out of business because shippers or brokers won't work with them once they are deemed unsafe by these scores."

DeMatteis wants the FMCSA to be responsible for a carrier's safety fitness, not the shipper, or broker. He notes the problem comes down to the FMCSA basing its safety program on percentages. "No matter how many bad carriers you get rid of, you are always going to have 35 that are going to have alerts," because only 65 percent of carriers can be deemed safe at any one time.

Kazan at Target agrees, stating whether talking CARB rules, CSA rules, or hours of service, he feels there must be a conspiracy to slow down the service and effectiveness of the trucking industry whenever possible.

Hours Of Service

"One of our biggest problems is the hours of service rules," says Kazan. "I find it difficult for someone to tell me when I'm supposed to be tired and when I can't drive anymore."

Stoiber agrees, noting the two biggest issues relating to hours of service are coming in July when the Federal Government is supposed to finalize its ruling. There are concerns the changes will result in fewer hours per driver to operate legally, requiring more drivers to be hired, which will increase trucking costs.

DeMatteis concurs, adding that bureaucrats are looking to require electronic on-board recorders, as well as tighten hours of service regulations. "This is all in the name of safety," he says. "The number of truck-related fatalities continues to decrease every year, to the point where the past couple of years, it has been at an all-time low. Too many regulations are forcing a lot of good people — motor carriers — to re-evaluate whether their investment is worth it, because there is nothing cheap about trucking."

State Of The Trucking Industry

How well the trucking industry is doing depends somewhat on the person you ask. Generally, there have been worse times and better, considering the U.S. economy of recent years.

Stoiber of L&M observes, "It has been a tough period from 2008 to now. But these companies have got their houses in order financially. The rates have not come back as strongly as the industry would like, but they

"It makes it difficult for the smaller truck operators, which makes up a large component for hauling. This adversely affects freight capacity because of the difficulties in being compliant. People are realizing they are going to have to make the investment for updating their equipment."

— Robert Goldstein, Genpro, Inc.

will come back a little because there will be an increasing volume of freight." This will result in more loads being available for a small pool of carriers.

DeMatteis adds a lot of trucking companies are doing well, but at the same time the business is as tough as it has ever been. He says it's very difficult to enter trucking because "there's a lot of things being thrown at these guys," a reference to the increasing burden of rules and regulations.

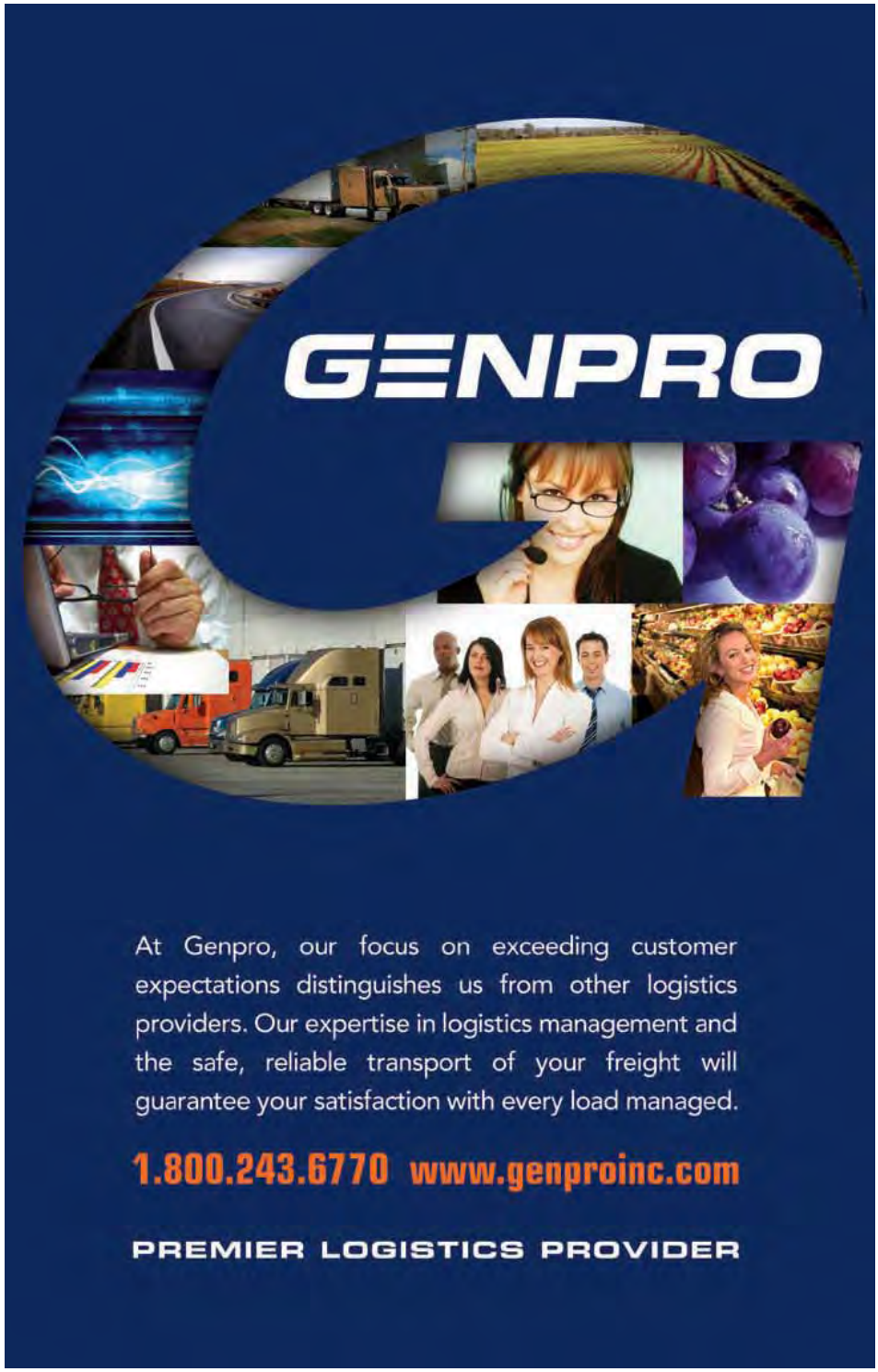
Target's Kazan sees produce rail volume increasing in specific routes such as California to New York, with the result being fewer straight loads for truckers. "It's very competitive," he states. "We are finding our customers are buying a lot more mixed loads. The rails are not making four or five pick-ups and taking two days to load. That is the trucker's lane."

Goldstein at Genpro observes increasing demand for team drivers providing expedited service for highly perishable items. This is especially true for shipments prior to holidays and during times of high market volatility.

Kazan adds that produce loads from California to New York are expected to arrive in four days to five days, at the most. "The shippers don't care about the fact the trucker arrives at a dock and has to wait four hours to get loaded, nor does anyone consider the fact that the trucker arrives at Hunts Point and it takes 10 hours to get unloaded," he details.

Rich Macleod, vice president, pallet division North America, for Salinas, CA-based TransFresh Corp., which specializes in modified and controlled atmosphere transportation for perishable products, is well aware of the poor treatment truckers too often receive from the produce industry, including loading and unloading delays. "A lot of people have seen the Costco model and they schedule their appointments," he points out. "If you are there for your window, you will get unloaded. Now, if you miss your window, you'll be hosed." As an example, he says many receivers will expect a four-day coast-to-coast delivery, but Costco allows five days. Additionally, Costco provides a similar courtesy to shippers. If the big box chain wants an order loaded and shipped on a Tuesday, they will typically place the order the previous Friday.

Despite the challenges being raised in the industry, "some efficiencies have worked their way into the system from five years ago," Mcleod concludes. **pb**



producebusiness

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

Initiating Industry Improvement

To get ahead in the produce business, you need to
stay ahead of the produce business.

For subscription information, please go to • www.producebusiness.com
or call us today at • 561-994-1118, Ext 109

producebusiness

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

P.O. Box 810425 • Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425

PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF MIATECH

Technological advancements in misting systems and tamper-resistant packaging are among the contributors to safer supply chains.

It's A Brave New World: How Technology Is Affecting The Produce Supply Chain

Today's fast pace leads to fresher, more healthful fruits and vegetables for the consumer and better margins and profitability for the retailer. **BY AMY SAWELSON**

Among many consumers, even today, the preconception of the produce industry is that it is quaint and low-tech. Bucolic scenes of overall-clad farmers lovingly cultivating crops; vintage tractors harvesting at sunrise and workers packing and labeling wooden bushels and crates by hand exist today primarily in the imagination, enhanced by the marketing efforts of fresh food companies, retailers and restaurant chains. The image of "farm fresh" wholesomeness conjures up a simpler time, something that appeals to consumers, certainly where their food is concerned.

In truth, the produce industry is riding the wave of sophisticated technological innovations at every level of production and marketing. It is these innovations that are ensuring the freshest, highest quality, healthiest produce year-round throughout the United States and all of North America. Advances in technology are inevitable as they are increasingly more vital to moving produce successfully from growers to consumers.

Keeping Produce At Its Best

Getting fresh fruits and vegetables from where they're grown to their final destination of consumers' plates entails the coordination of hardware and software systems that track and monitor the produce every step along the supply chain in concert with packaging that functions to protect it, promote ultimate shelf-life and display the contents in such a way as to entice purchase at store-level. Today's packaging is designed and made from materials that optimize freshness and reduce shrink, thus helping retailers maintain their margins and profitability. Kurt Zuhlke, President and CEO of Kurt Zuhlke and Associates, headquartered in Bangor, PA, says that his company got into the thermal forming business because "there were too many quality problems with the earlier packaging technology of injection molding. The quality of the machinery and materials to make clamshells and other rigid packaging has improved tremendously," he says. "Today's thermal forming technology is so superior that most manufacturers have made the switch."

Jack Tilley, market research analyst for Shelton, CT-based Inline Plastics Corp., adds, "We provide the clear rigid plastic packaging that, if packed at the distributor, allows the retailer to put the product directly on the shelf without repacking. Our rigid containers allow better protection of contents during shipping than many types of flexible packaging."

Tampering of fresh products on display is an issue that is a challenge to retailers. Inline has addressed this problem with packaging that prevents tampering. According to Tilley, "Our Safe-T-Fresh line of containers features our patented Safe-T-Gard tear strip, which alerts a customer if a package has been opened after it has been originally packed and closed. The tamper-resistant closing system of the Safe-T-Fresh line is user-friendly, yet deters

Side Note

PRODUCE TRACEABILITY INITIATIVE SPAWNS INNOVATION

The Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) is designed to help the industry maximize the effectiveness of current trace back procedures, while developing a standardized industry approach to enhance the speed and efficiency of traceability systems. The PTI has a vision that outlines a course of action to achieve supply-chain-wide adoption of electronic traceability of every case of produce. According to Dan Vache, vice president of supply chain management for the United Fresh Produce Association, based in Washington, D.C., "Traceability is a key element of the sales process. By labeling cases in the field or packing facility, pack-out information can be uploaded in real time. The data collected at point of packing can immediately be aggregated and report the pack-out, of say, heads of iceberg lettuce. If the harvest is reporting the pack-out is heavy on 24-size heads rather than size 18, the sales team receives the information and are able to match the customers requiring that size with the harvest," he details.

Programs created for PTI can also collect and report data on an individual's productivity and record where a clamshell and flat of berries were picked and by whom. "The program can interface with payroll and grower accounting systems with little or no additional data entry," adds Vache. "This eliminates paper records and is much more accurate."

Vache continues, "The use of source code labels, not to be confused with case-labeling the PTI recommends, enables the consumer to know your farmer," an ongoing trend currently used by many retailers at store-level. "Using a Smartphone or accessing the Internet will take the consumer to the website of the grower and can be used as a marketing tool by the retailer to elicit ideas and comments on product quality from consumers. Products using the latest bar code technology can also help in category management and more efficient and accurate rings at the point of sale," he points out. "Products or specific brands receiving comments regarding quality or condition via the website provide valuable feedback to both the retailer and brand owner. The PTI provides visibility all through the supply chain, and because each pallet and case can be tracked at each link in the supply chain, if there is ever an issue of poor quality or possible contamination, the system allows for surgical removal of suspect product and prevents the indictment of an entire category, as happened with bagged spinach a few years ago."

RedLine Solutions, headquartered in Santa Clara, CA, creates software systems designed to help companies become PTI-compliant. Gary Fleming, RedLine's vice president of strategic services division, explains it this way: "We provide software and consulting services, as well as hardware from our leading hardware partners, to educate, guide and advise businesses of all sizes on matters related to traceability based on our experience with growers, shippers, packers, distributors and wholesalers."

Companies may have internal traceability within their four walls, but the standard today must be used across the entire supply chain and be applicable and accessible for every operation that touches the case. "The problem is that buyers receive scores of differing formats and versions of labels," Fleming contends. "Our solutions work with existing systems to provide these standards for total visibility from field harvest through shipment to the customer. Our suite of produce traceability applications allows grower/-shippers to collect data and see detailed transaction information where the work is happening — in real-time. Our cost-effective solutions make operations more efficient and productive, while meeting PTI requirements."

As co-chair of the PTI technology group, Andy Kennedy, president of Durham, NC-based FoodLogiQ, is closely involved with developing industry-specific best practices from GS1 specifications, a series of data identifiers used to improve supply-chain management. "In one recent pilot, we worked with Associated Grocers in Baton Rouge, LA, which services 280 independent retailers within a 400-mile radius, and Minneapolis, MN-based 3PL, a C.H. Robinson company. We tested PTI Milestone 6 — record and store inbound GTIN and Lot against receipt to the distribution center, and Milestone 7 — record and store GTIN and Lot against outbound shipments to retail stores. This enables Associated Grocers to know precisely which case/lot went to which store and from which supplier those cases came from. PTI gives them greater visibility than current one-up, one-down traceability regulatory requirements."

Traceability helps retailers with quality management. Some stores have a clientele that demands perfect produce and is less concerned with the cost. Other retailers are known for their competitive pricing. Ron Myers, executive vice president of LINK-Fresh Inc., located in Ventura, CA, explains that his company has applications that "allow for product inspection at intake at the wholesaler or distributor and sends it to the right customer, say Whole Foods vs. a Safeway store." **pb**

tampering and ensures a high level of leak resistance, reducing losses during transportation from distributor to retailer."

Miatech Inc., in Clackamas, OR, manufactures sophisticated humidifying and filtering equipment. The recently patented Bio-Turbo unit improves shelf-life and food safety by filtering out ethylene gas and airborne pathogens when installed in cold storage warehouses, "Between proper humidification and the elimination of ethylene gas and bacteria, the result is greater flexibility in storage," says Matt Shawcross, vice president of business development. "There's not as much turnover or restocking needed, and shrink in the form of weight loss is greatly reduced."

At the store level, Miatech's automatic misting systems are a far cry from the drippy systems of the past. "They put out a lighter mist that's much less intrusive to the customer," describes Shawcross. "The fine atomization is the result of higher pressure and the self-contained system eliminates bacteria growth. It's a low-voltage system, so there are energy savings, as well."

Remote Control

Silver Creek Software, located in Boise, ID, is the developer of Visual Produce, an accounting software program that addresses the business requirements of primarily fresh produce distributors. According to President John Carpenter, "We've been able to improve

"Between proper humidification and the elimination of ethylene gas and bacteria, the result is greater flexibility in storage. There's not as much turnover or restocking needed, and shrink in the form of weight loss is greatly reduced."

— Matt Shawcross, Miatech Inc.

warehouse management and inventory control with a system that scans product coming in and going out. Buyers can place orders on their iPad or Smartphone, while salespeople in the field can check availability and place an order. A retail customer with a centralized buying facility at a terminal market can source product at the market and then supply independent stores from a central warehouse."

In the not-so-distant past — just four years ago — placing orders entailed the buyer calling, faxing or emailing the distributor. Buyers could never be quite sure their orders went through. Faxes jammed; servers were down; it was 5:00 pm and the customer service department was closed. Today, buyers can order directly online, eliminating steps and streamlining the process. Charles Shafae, president and founder of dProduce Man Software, headquartered in Half Moon Bay, CA, says, "Just four years ago, you had to have a network of desktop computers and an in-house server. Software and hardware were to be synchronized and you had to have an IT person install it on to each machine. Now, there is 'the cloud,' — banks of physical and virtual servers offsite that back each other up, so you're never down. Today, you are not limited to PCs or laptops in your office. The software is available on the cloud and you can use any device — an iPhone, iPad, PDA, Mac, or PC — as long as you can connect to the Internet."

Mick Heatherington is vice president for sales and marketing for Prophet North America, an international produce software company with an office in Bakersfield, CA. "We traditionally work with growers, importers, wholesalers, foodservice, value-added packers/processors and distributors," he says. "Our flagship product, Pr3, is the result of 20 years of experience in the United States and around the world working with all sectors of the produce industry. Over the past number of years, in addition to this core sector, we are working directly with retailers themselves. Retailers have and will become even more involved in the supply chain, and for a number of reasons. They want to make supply more straight-line, and that, in effect, means having a more direct relationship with the producers. Why do this?" he asks. "It drives costs from the supply chain and it also allows them to monitor food safety and traceability better." To this end, Prophet is working directly with retail giants Wal-Mart and Tesco and many of their sourcing and supply chain partners and service providers.

A Look Into The Future

What will the produce industry look like in 2018? That's not so far into the future, yet looking back five years at the technology available is like a glimpse into ancient history. Vince Norman, marketing coordinator for Locus

CONFIDENCE
Knowing that your Customer's Products will be Safe.
Safe-T-Fresh®
Tamper Evident, Tamper Resistant Packaging.
Highlight the quality and safety of your products.
Call 1-800-826-5567 x7035 for your FREE Samples
Mention Promo PB0313
Inline Plastics Corp.
Good Things Come In Our Packages®
InlinePlastics.com

dPRODUCE MAN
Software for the Produce Industry

Fully Integrated Online Produce Software
NEW From dProduceMan Online

- Work from the office, home, or road
- No software to install. Simply sign in from any Internet-connection
- Create and print or email orders right from your dProduce Man Online
- Your data is safe on our redundant servers and is automatically backed up every day.
- 24 / 7 Tech support is included in your monthly fee
- NO long term contract or annual support fees.
- Evaluate dProduce Man Online FREE
- Yes, try it ALL; a full working version! For 30-days FREE

Estab. 1980

NEW

Fully integrated online produce software
Let us show you

Call: 888-776-3626 • Fax: 650-712-9972
sales@dproduceman.com

producebusiness
MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

To get ahead in the produce business, you need to stay ahead of the produce business.

The International Business Magazine Serving the Fruit, Vegetable and Floral Industries.

For subscription information, please visit
www.producebusiness.com
or call 561-994-1118

"The use of source code labels, not to be confused with case-labeling the PTI recommends, enables the consumer to know your farmer. Using a Smartphone or accessing the Internet will take the consumer to the website of the grower and can be used as a marketing tool by the retailer to elicit ideas and comments on product quality from consumers."

— Dan Vache, United Fresh Produce Association

Traxx, based in Jupiter, FL says that he sees, "more oversight and regulation. Smart track units will make sure everything stays fresh. It used to be that temperature recorders would tell you that the temperature went up for 30 minutes while product was in transit. You'll see more scanners like the Locus Traxx, which provide an active hand in monitoring so that shippers can be proactive and take the necessary steps to correct the problem in real time so food and profits are saved."

Alfonso Cano, assistant produce director for the 36-unit Northgate Gonzalez Market chain, based in Anaheim, CA, has this vision of the future: "With the hyper-connective culture, the biggest struggle is to keep our customers out of search mode — to make Northgate their go-to store. In five years, the population will be moving back to the city to live. They'll be looking for same-day delivery to their residences, and the produce they order will have to meet their desired specification."

Tilley of Inline adds, "I see increased use of QR (Quick Response) codes to convey COOL, safety and nutritional information. Also, new packaging designs that emphasize fruits and vegetables for increased growth of healthy snacking alternatives will take hold."

Dwayne Smallwood, produce manager at two units of Okie's Thriftway Market, located in Ocean Park, WA, also sees more pre-cut, prepackaged fruits and vegetables in the future.

Shafae of dProduce Man's expects "the cost of technology to keep going down. Rather than each company having its own IT infrastructure, everything is being done online spreading the cost — you're renting your software needs, which are being continually upgraded without your becoming involved in the process."

Prophet's Heatherington envisions "the use of personal data devices such as Smartphones and tablets, which will continue to evolve and provide businesses with more tools and applications, thereby helping with customer service and keeping executives on top of the business 24/7." He adds, "The new food safety/traceability regulations, including the cost of implementation, will push consumer- and supply-chain-based transparency, resulting in increased technology adoption and further sharing of data between produce throughout the supply chain. This will create the environment to go further with true B2B data integration, and that, in turn, will evolve into cost and efficiency synergies leading to increased alliances that will result in more consolidation."

There is no doubt that technology in the produce industry is moving so fast that to blink is to miss out on some new hardware, software or application that can make the difference between success and failure. Many individuals in the produce industry feel challenged by the speed of change and the highly technical nature of the tools of today's business practices. Observes Northgate Gonzalez Markets' Cano, "Deals made at 8:00 am may have to be renegotiated by noon." However, the end result of today's fast pace is fresher, more healthful fruits and vegetables for the consumer and better margins and profitability for the retailer. What could be more wholesome than that? **pb**

12th Annual MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING SUPPLEMENT

SPONSORED BY

12th Annual MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING SUPPLEMENT

Every once in a while, the opportunity presents itself to do well while also doing good. Such is the case with this, our eleventh annual Masters of Merchandising supplement. The industry owes a tip of the hat to the collection of industry leaders who elected to invest with us in a marketing vehicle that is both promotional and educational.

Each vendor worked hard to produce a piece of advice for the industry on how to more effectively merchandise the product category at hand. By sharing knowledge acquired while working with retailers throughout North America, these vendors help retailers move more product, help growers find outlets for production and help the world by encouraging a more healthful diet.

Increasing sales of fruits and vegetables is not only a matter of big industry initiatives. Sales in general can increase only if sales of specific items increase. That means knowing how to build consumer trial and how to offer the most effective assortment; it means knowing how to market things on a day-to-day basis and how to do some out-of-the-box promotions just to keep consumer interest high.

Retailers, please take the time to review this offering carefully. When did you last think about how to increase sales of carrots? Or papayas? Or artichokes? Here is a chance to think of merchandising in a different way. When did you last really consider how to best sell bananas — was it when you were a produce department manager 10, 20 or 30 years ago? Here is an opportunity to revisit old subjects with a different perspective.

The sponsors of this year's Masters of Merchandising section are a special breed. We spoke to many producers who declined to participate, saying they simply had no idea how to merchandise their own items effectively. When we offered to help them research the matter, we encountered all too many vendors who said, "That is the retailer's problem; we just book loads."

Merchandising is everyone's problem, and in the produce industry, "The Times, They Are A-Changin.'" Retailers today are in a position to

As retailers consolidate, they are in a position to expect more support from producers, and intellectual capital is just about the most valuable support one can provide.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CATEGORY	SPONSOR	PAGE
Apples	Domex SuperFresh Growers	62
Artichokes	Ocean Mist Farms	64
Asparagus	Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association	66
Avocados	California Avocado Commission	68
Avocados, Light-Skinned	Brooks Tropicals, Inc.	70
Bananas	Dole Fresh Fruit Company	72
Carrots	Grimmway Farms	76
Cherries	Chelan Fresh Marketing	78
Citrus	Booth Ranches LLC	80
Dates	Bard Valley	82
Dried Fruit & Nuts	Sun Dried Marketing, Inc.	84
Fresh-Cut Vegetables	Apio, Inc.	86
Garlic	Maurice A. Auerbach, Inc.	88
Green Beans	Apio, Inc.	90
Hydroponic Butter Lettuce	Hollandia Produce	92
Kiwifruit	Catania	94
Lighting	Baero North America, Inc.	96
Limes	Vision Import Group LLC	98
Mangos	Ciruli Brothers, LLC	100
Melons	Fresh Quest	102
Mushrooms	Monterey Mushrooms, Inc.	104
Onions	Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Promotion Committee	106
Papayas	Brooks Tropicals, Inc.	108
Potatoes	U.S. Potato Board	110
Salad Dressings	Marie's	112
Strawberries	Naturipe	114
Sweet Onions	Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	116
Tomatoes	Village Farms	118
Tropicals	Turbana Corp.	120
Veggie Kits	Mann Packing Company, Inc.	122

12th Annual MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING SUPPLEMENT

expect more support from producers, and intellectual capital is just about the most valuable support one can provide. So kudos to our Masters of Merchandising sponsors.

There is always a temptation to try to keep knowledge tightly protected and controlled, but oftentimes what goes around comes around, and in sharing their knowledge, our sponsors are giving the industry a great gift. May it return to them many times over.

As an added service to our retail readers, we're printing additional copies of this guide, so if you would like extra copies of the 2012 Masters of Merchandising supplement to give to your colleagues, please fill out the form below and fax or mail it to us. For the cost of shipping and handling, we'll send you up to five supplements, so they will be available on a first-come basis.

If you require larger quantities for distribution to store-level personnel, please call our offices at 561-994-1118 for information on customized reprints. **pb**

yes, please send me _____ copies of the Masters of Merchandising Supplement
Cost: $5 for one copy, $10 for 5 copies. Amount enclosed $_____

Please make checks payable to: PRODUCE BUSINESS

Please print legibly

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

☐ **Amex** ☐ **MasterCard** ☐ **Visa**

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Fax this form with your credit card information to:
561-994-1610 *or mail with your check to:*
PB Masters of Merchandising
P.O. Box 810425 • Boca Raton, FL 33481

DOMEX SUPERFRESH GROWERS
151 Low Road
Yakima, WA 98908
Phone: 509-966-1814 • Fax: 509-966-3608
Web: www.superfreshgrowers.com
Email: lqueen@superfreshgrowers.com

During the past decade, apple varieties have blossomed. With the success of new "club" varieties in the market and changing consumer attitudes toward the entire apple category, retailers are approaching apple sales with renewed vigor. Now more than ever, savvy apple merchandising will generate huge year-round return on investment.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Nothing attracts attention and generates sales like a large apple display. The display should be well signed with variety name and flavor info and placed at the front of the department in your primary selling location. During the peak of the season (September – December), a secondary display either in the department or around the store can generate 27 percent in additional sales.

Color Breaks: With the large number of bi-color apples available in today's market, color breaks are more important than ever. Using citrus to create effective breaks can also generate impulse purchases between categories.

PACKAGING OPTIONS

There are more options than ever when it comes to displaying fruit. Clamshells, poly bags, mesh bags, display-ready boxes and high-graphic bins are among the tools you can use to increase your apple category performance.

Increase Sales with Bins: Superfresh Growers® has developed a sleeve-bin display that feels "loca.l. These displays drive impulse sales and generate incremental sales at the same time. Pair this display with our earth-friendly paper tote bags and you have the perfect opportunity to sell apples anywhere in the store. These displays are especially helpful for cross-promotions. The bins are also handy for creating bulk or bag waterfall apple displays.

Bags: Create a separate section for your bag program to deliver incremental volume and sales. Poly bags like the 2-lb. Superfresh Kids™ bags are ideal for smaller fruit and appeal to families and seniors who may not be able to eat a typical large apple from the bulk display. Retailers that feature 2-lb. bagged apple promotions can realize a 74.3 percent volume increase ("true lift") and generate a 42.6 percent incremental volume lift!

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Mixing the ad items and types of ads maximizes impact: Frequency of advertising has a strong impact on the effectiveness of promotion plans. Because apples are so popular, there's a temptation to advertise the same items at the same price many times during the season. However, experience shows that this can have a negative effect on the promotion goals.

Best single item ads will be the top two selling apple varieties for a retailer. When running combination ads, there should be a balance between what drives a retailer's business today, and what they will want to drive incremental performance over time. Combinations of mainline varieties: Gala, Fuji, Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, and premium varieties — Honeycrisp, Braeburn, Jazz, Cameo, etc. — are an effective mix of items to advertise. Advertising mainline varieties will use the strength of the retailers' core items, while the premium varieties will help increase awareness of new segments and reach out to those consumers who have already discovered these items. The result is an expanded customer base for the category and the best mix of sales and profits.

Ad Frequency: Starting September 1, it is recommended to feature apples at a minimum every two weeks. Maximum sales result from retailers that run eight ads every quarter.

Apple-Rama: Almost any combination of apple varieties can be featured in your full-blown apple variety ads. It is recommended to run a major apple ad in early November as all varieties of new crop apples are available for promotion.

Health Promos: After the Holidays, consumers are looking for healthy foods to help them reach their weight-loss goals. This is the ideal time for a major ad and display push of your "healthy" apple category. Superfresh Growers has created a 100-Calorie Snack ironman stand poster to help educate consumers. The poster features a QR code that consumers can scan with their Smartphones to read more about healthy apples on the Superfresh Growers website.

Holiday-Specific Ads: Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year's, Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day are the traditional holidays for apples, but the holiday ads that trump all others is Halloween, moving up to 11 percent more volume than Thanksgiving ads. And don't forget to include apples in your ads around major sporting events too.

Timing: Featuring apples year-round is a recipe for a more profitable produce department. The Superfresh category management team has analyzed sales data over a three-month period revealing that stores lose volume sales and margin when they decrease shelf space for apples when stone fruit arrives. Doing this caused gross profits from the apple category to decline more than 11 percent and volume to decline 20 percent. However, when apples were merchandised adjacent to stone fruit, the sales dollars increased as much as 40 percent, or more, on average.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Culling several times a day along with proper rotation are critical to building consumer interest in apples. Bruised apples or disorganized displays lower consumer confidence in the product and they will turn to other sources for good apples.

Temperature: Store cartons under constant refrigeration down to 32° F with relative humidity of 90 percent for maximum shelf-life and eating quality.

Rotate: Ensure oldest product is staged to move to shelf display first.

Trust.
The Superfresh difference.

Market analysis, crop reports, category data and more on the go. Visit our new mobile site!

DOMEX superfresh growers®

Our difference makes all the difference™

www.superfreshgrowers.com

OCEAN MIST FARMS

10855 Ocean Mist Parkway
Castroville, CA 95012
Phone: 831-770-6435 • Fax: 831-633-4363
Web: www.oceanmist.com
Mobilesite: m.oceanmist.com

ARTICHOKE AVAILABILITY

Ocean Mist Farms is the only year-round grower of fresh artichokes. Three growing areas in California, along with proprietary varieties, provide a 52-week harvest schedule.

SPRING 2013 CROP

March through mid-May is peak season for artichokes. The crop generally starts peaking on the jumbo to large sizes in March. May is the peak for the foodie favorite size: the baby artichoke. Traditionally, the larger sizes peak at the front end in March and April with the smaller sizes peaking in April and May.

UPC STICKERS

Ocean Mist Farms developed a UPC sticker, the first of its kind for bulk artichokes, to comply with the country-of-origin labeling laws. The stickers, available on two sizes of artichokes with the current PLU codes 4262 and 4084, are applied in the field during harvest. Ocean Mist worked with our packaging partner to create a special adhesive that is food-safe.

MERCHANDISING ARTICHOKES

Artichokes are a natural merchandising complementary item to use throughout the produce department. Artichokes have a rich, deep-green color that complement other produce items and "stack" well for building large end-cap displays. If handled properly, Ocean Mist artichokes will look and taste fresh for up to two weeks. It is important to keep them cool and moist. Here are some tips to help merchandise artichokes:

- Refrigerate artichokes on display at 34° F or 1° C.
- Trays or bowls with ice or water work well as merchandising tools to keep stems hydrated.
- Place next to lemons and/or fresh garlic bulbs for color blocking and to encourage impulse purchases. Lemons and garlic are commonly used in preparing fresh artichokes.
- Create secondary displays in other departments to prompt an impulse purchase as a meal solution. Artichokes make the perfect side dish for any meat, poultry or fish entree.
- Side dipping ingredients such as mayo, balsamic vinegar and ready-to-eat sauces make a great cross-promotion and encourage impulse purchases as meal solutions.

NUTRITION INFORMATION DRIVES SALES

The antioxidant level of fresh artichokes is another powerful merchandising opportunity.

Seventy-nine percent of survey respondents noted the fact that the artichokes are higher in antioxidants than any other vegetable. This knowledge has a significant impact on future purchases.

DIGITAL TOOLS SUPPORT SPRING PROMOTIONS

With less than half of shoppers making the decision to buy artichokes in store, it increases the importance of reaching out to people when they are not in the retail environment with information about artichoke usage, nutrition and preparation. We see an opportunity this spring with social media tools and our *Artichoke Aficionado Club* members to update artichoke lovers about weekly advertised retail specials for fresh artichokes.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter allow us to communicate advertised specials to a targeted audience. Retailers can also leverage their internal corporate digital teams for promotional support.

- facebook.com/californiaartichokes
- twitter.com/artichokerecipe

ARTICHOKE AFICIONADO CLUB

This Ocean Mist Farms *Artichoke Aficionado Club* has more than 33,000 members nationwide. These club members are provided with recipe ideas, how-to-videos and regionalized notifications about where to find artichokes on sale.

Ocean Mist began its love affair with artichokes over 80 years ago when it pioneered the commercial cultivation of artichokes and developed a line of exceptional, richly flavored varieties that today supply over 80% of the nation's demand year-round.

Today, more and more vegetable lovers are falling for the unique flavor, antioxidant boost and shared experience of enjoying the alluring artichoke.

Artichokes are just one of the objects of our passion. For more information on any of our 30 commodities, visit **oceanmist.com**

OCEAN MIST FARMS

Trusted Growers. Quality Driven.

Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association

PERUVIAN ASPARAGUS IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION

Phone: 817-793-3133
Contact: Priscilla Lleras
Email: prestige@1scom.net

QUICK TIPS

FIVE WAYS TO GROW YOUR PERUVIAN ASPARAGUS CATEGORY:

1. Go big and promote! Visibility sells!
2. Educate customers on usage! Provide recipe information from grilling to soups.
3. Promote alternative colors, especially for home chefs and entertaining.
4. Highlight nutrition and health! Asparagus offers multiple health attributes.
5. Cross-merchandise with proteins and provide a meal idea.

YEAR-ROUND ASPARAGUS MEANS PROFITS

Asparagus represents increasing potential for high ring sales in the produce department. More and more consumers are looking for healthy and convenient foods, and fresh asparagus presents an easy-to-prepare and highly nutritious solution. According to USDA-ERS statistics, per capita consumption of fresh asparagus has grown and remained consistent over the past decade.

Asparagus from Peru, a principal supplier, allows retailers to complement other seasonal sources and offer quality product year-round. Retailers can count on consistent, quality Peruvian asparagus to build sales and provide ample displays of product throughout the year. To assist retailers in managing the category, the Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association (PAIA) has developed a Category Management Plan Outline for Fresh Peruvian Asparagus, available from any PAIA member or the association office at prestige@1scom.net.

VIBRANT, BOLD DISPLAYS MOVE PRODUCT!

The year-round availability of asparagus supports programs designed to build the category not only during peak holiday periods but throughout the year. Focus on the following key areas to boost sales:

• **Vibrant Colors:** A variety of colors are available from Peru. Use of multiple colors makes for attractive display alternatives. Fresh asparagus is readily available in green, white and purple. Showcase unique colors, like purple or white, by adding these products to displays where fresh green asparagus is featured to create interesting and impactful displays.

• **Visibility:** Size sells!!! Strategically display the category to ensure consumers see it. Many successful retailers display asparagus at the front of the produce department and utilize island displays and corner caps to guarantee consumers see it. Making sure displays are especially visible and well-positioned in the produce department will gain sales. Advantageously cross-merchandising asparagus with other grocery items will build asparagus sales and add additional ring for the department.

• **Variety:** Fresh asparagus now comes in a wide variety of sizes and packaging to enhance display practices and meet consumers' needs. Be sure to display several different packaging options to increase convenience for customers. Large display tables of different product forms (whole spear bunches, microwave tray-packed trimmed spears, packaged green and/or white asparagus, packaged asparagus tips, white and purple asparagus) will increase sales and add profits to the produce department.

UTILIZE MULTIPLE PROMOTION AIDS

Fresh asparagus is a great item to promote for entertaining and holidays, especially during Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Retailers should also capitalize on the opportunity to promote asparagus during the summer for picnics or barbecues.

Promoting multiple colors of Peruvian asparagus together may encourage consumers to try a new color. Retailers can also use alternative pricing methods, such as by the bunch instead of the pound, to showcase the value of the product. Value-added and packaged fresh product can be used as part of a meal solutions offering. In-store demo programs increase consumer awareness of asparagus as an easy and economical dinner component.

Use signage to stress usage ideas including "tasty party item", "easy to barbecue", "microwaveable", and "quick and healthy snack.

Promote Nutrition: Health-related promotion is a definite method of gaining sales. Asparagus contains a host of health benefits:

- Asparagus is low in calories
- Naturally fat- and cholesterol-free
- Good source of potassium, Vitamin A, Vitamin C
- Rich in rutin and folacin, which has been proven important in the duplication of cells for growth and repair of the body.

Promotions designed to highlight nutritional benefits will lead to loyal purchasers. Combine asparagus with other Superfoods in an in-store promotion outlining the health attributes of these products. Health aspects appeal to a wide segment of the market including active life-stylists, young adults, growing families and seniors.

Cross Merchandising Opportunities: Fresh asparagus has numerous cross-merchandising opportunities including salad, oils and dressings, with deli or seafood items, and wines. During the summer, placing a display next to barbecue-style meats and fish is a great way to promote picnic items. Value packaged or tray-packed fresh asparagus can also be cross-merchandised with packaged salad. Fresh and packaged asparagus can be cross-merchandised with other departments to provide a meal solution for customers, for example in the meat department with steaks or in the deli with roasted chicken.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Use in-store demos to push impulse sales.
- Put asparagus front and center with a good price point.
- MIX and MATCH colors for more vibrant displays.
- Promote value-added and packaged fresh product as an easy convenient side dish.

VALUE ADDED

In an effort to increase household penetration and reach new consumers, a number of Peruvian asparagus importers are working closely with their suppliers to increase the category through value-added options — including microwaveable and ready-to-eat designed for both retail and foodservice. These value-added programs provide the consumer with convenience and value.

CARE AND HANDLING

Asparagus should be bright-looking with closed, firm tips. The butt-end of fresh asparagus should be cleanly cut and sufficiently hydrated. Display under refrigeration or with the butt-end in water or touching a wet pad. Be sure to monitor the condition of water in display trays and change frequently. In the backroom, keep asparagus cold (34-36 degrees F) and moist (damp room) prior to display. Fresh asparagus is not ethylene-sensitive but is susceptible to absorbing very strong odors.

•ALPINEFRESH•AYCOFARMS•CARBAMERICAS•CRYSTALVALLEY•CUSTOMIZEDBROKERS•GOURMETTRADING•
HARVESTSENSATIONS•KEYSTONEFRUIT•MISSIONPRODUCE•PERISHABLESPECIALIST•PROGRESSIVEPRODUCE•SOUTHERNSPECIALTIES

PEAK QUALITY
ALPINE FRESH
YOUR ASPARAGUS GROWER
Toll Free (800)292-8777
PH (305)594-9117 FAX (305)594-8506
JOHN LYONS - JLYONS@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-7517
ANDY GARCIA - AGARCIA@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-8833
GREG FLEMING - GFLEMING@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-2939
MAURO SANGIO - MSANGIO@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-8509
EMILY OTTENWALDER - EOHENWALDER@ALPINEFRESH - (706)464-8958
GREG MILLS - GMILLS@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (786) 464-8909
Loading locations:
Miami, McAllen, Yuma, Los Angeles

GREEN, WHITE & PURPLE ASPARAGUS
310.216.7575 | gourmettrading.net
Gourmet™

Ayco
954-788-6800
www.aycofarms.com
Pompano Beach, FL
Our sales team is ready to serve you.

Harvest Sensations®
Premium Fresh Asparagus Year-Round
Miami
305.591.8173
Add Exitement to Your Plate
www.harvestsensations.com
Los Angeles
213.895.6968

CARB-AMERICAS
YOUR OFFSHORE PRODUCE SOURCE
Headquarters: Jeff, Hilda, Scott (954)786-0000
Los Angeles: Pat Ramirez (424)477-5530
New Jersey: Danny Pollak (732)655-4223
Export Division: John Brown (415)992-7500

Year Round Asparagus
& Nationwide Distribution
Contact Cruz, Joe, or Bryan at
800 549 3420
www.missionpro.com
LEE BRANDS
Mission

CRYSTAL VALLEY SPECIALTY PRODUCE
www.CrystalValleyFoods.com
Green & White Asparagus
52 Weeks A Year
French Beans, Snow Peas, Snaps & Baby Veg
Miami
(800) 359-5631
Jay, Veronica, Jay T., Helen, Bobby, Rick
Los Angeles
(213) 627-2383
Brian, Marcelino, Steve, Hector

The Perishable Specialist Inc.
CUSTOMS BROKER
theperishablespecialist.com
Frank A. Ramos
T 305.477.9906
F 305.477.9975
C 305.986.1969
E frank@theperishablespecialist.com
9831 N.W. 58th Street, Unit 131
Doral, Florida 33178

CLEAR CUSTOMS. FAST.
EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ASPARAGUS.
Find out more at
(305) 471-8989 or
customizedbrokers.net
customized Brokers
A CROWLEY Company

Southern SELECTS
Premium Asparagus
• East & West Coast Distribution
• Green & White Asparagus
• Southern Selects Value Added
• Year Round Availability
• Private Label Programs
SOUTHERN SPECIALTIES
954-784-6500
www.southernspecialties.com
www.southernselects.com

AMERICAS KEYSTONE • PROGRESSIVE
Fresh, Year-Round
Tracy, Dan, Shawn, Matthew, and Mike
800.498.1577
asparagus@keystonefruit.com
Keystone

AMERICAS KEYSTONE • PROGRESSIVE
Fresh, Year-Round
Contact:
Gary, Cory, Don
800.900.0757
asparagus@progressiveproduce.com
PROGRESSIVE PRODUCE

•ALPINEFRESH•AYCOFARMS•CARBAMERICAS•CRYSTALVALLEY•CUSTOMIZEDBROKERS•GOURMETTRADING•

CALIFORNIA AVOCADOS

12 Mauchly, Suite L
Irvine, CA 92618-6305
Phone: 949-341-1955 • Fax: 949-341-1970
Web: CaliforniaAvocado.com/Retail
Email: dcruz@avocado.org

CALIFORNIA AVOCADOS — CONSISTENTLY RELIABLE QUALITY, LOYALTY AND MARKETING SUPPORT

Quality, loyalty and marketing support are key reasons to merchandise California Avocados. Of retailers surveyed in 2012:

- 87%* said California Avocados have Consistently Reliable Quality (the highest score in the survey)
- 62%* said the California Avocado Commission's (CAC) Marketing Support is one of the most important reasons they merchandise California Avocados
- 62%* said they are Loyal to California Avocados, which is another important reason they merchandise California Avocados

**Among retailers that merchandise California Avocados*

CONSUMER MARKETING AND RETAIL SUPPORT HELP PROMOTE CALIFORNIA AVOCADOS

CAC's award-winning marketing programs provide retail support and resources to help promote California Avocados. Radio, TV, and outdoor billboard advertising (in select markets); in-store merchandising support such as in-store radio, display bins, point-of-sale and recipes; print ads in trade, culinary and lifestyle publications; online communication on blogs, popular consumer websites featuring recipes and nutritional information; a dedicated mobile website; and exceptional social media outreach with over 149K Facebook fans help create demand for California Avocados.

Hand Grown in California Avocado Grower stories and graphics, in-store Point-of-Sale and more are available at CaliforniaAvocado.com.

AMERICAN SUMMER HOLIDAYS = CALIFORNIA AVOCADO SALES OPPORTUNITIES

Traditional Summer Holidays (Memorial Day, Flag Day, Father's Day, the 4th of July, and Labor Day) are the perfect time to promote the All-American Avocado — California Avocados. Retail volume grew +95% and retail dollars grew +67% from 2007 during the 4th of July holiday.

2007 is an estimate – was not available in the restated data set*

Retail Data Source: SymphonyIRI Group / FreshLook Marketing (data restated in July 2)

AVOCADO NUTRITION INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

California Avocados are a tasty choice for a healthful diet. They're irresistibly rich in flavor and avocados also provide vital nutrients and phytochemicals. There are 13 vitamins that the body absolutely needs: vitamins A, C, D, E, K and the B vitamins (thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, biotin, vitamin B-6, vitamin B-12 and folate). Avocados naturally contain many of these vitamins.

California Avocado nutrition information and recipes are available online at CaliforniaAvocado.com/healthy-living.

MERCHANDISE CALIFORNIA AVOCADOS TO HELP MAXIMIZE CATEGORY PERFORMANCE

Recommended Display Ideas:

1. Position your primary display of California Avocados in a prominent and permanent location
   - Display ripe and breaking fruit to increase category performance

2. Merchandise California Avocados next to tomatoes and onions for a colorful display

3. Position a second or third display of avocados in a featured location to lift shopper awareness
   - Bagged California Avocados may be used as an excellent secondary display
   - Offer a two-sized program to provide a choice for all of your customers

INSIST ON CALIFORNIA AVOCADOS

Visit CaliforniaAvocado.com/Retail or contact your CAC Retail Marketing Director for more information and to order your *Hand Grown in California* materials.

QUICK TIP

Call the California Avocado Commission for all of your avocado retail support: rolling crop forecasts, ripening information, consumer and merchandising research, *Hand Grown in California* Grower stories, recipes, promotional opportunities, retail sales data and information resources.

Trusted

Consistently Reliable

HAND GROWN IN CALIFORNIA

Quality, loyalty and **support** are key reasons
retailers merchandise California Avocados (2012 Retail Survey).

Call **(800) 344-4333** or visit **CaliforniaAvocado.com/Retail** to learn more.

© 2013 California Avocado Commission. All rights reserved.

BROOKS TROPICALS
18400 SW 256th Street, Homestead, FL 33090
Phone: 800-327-4833 • Fax: 305-246-5827
Web: www.brookstropicals.com
Email: info@brookstropicals.com

INCREASE AVOCADO CATEGORY SALES WITH SLIMCADOS®

It's the green-skinned avocado from Southern Florida with less fat and fewer calories.* The SlimCado's large size complements your current avocado offering, grabbing attention from the value-conscious customer and even the dieter — normally an infrequent visitor in the avocado aisle.

Don't forget your Hispanic shopper, who will appreciate having a wider selection of a favorite fruit.

Avocado aficionados were thrilled to hear that avocados contain "good" fat. Still doctors suggest even "good" fat be eaten in moderation (70 calories a day). Those 70 calories go much further with SlimCados. SlimCado's distinctive light avocado taste can be added to:

- Green salads — morsels of SlimCados tossed in make each forkful more delectable.
- Hot soups — cold cubes of these avocados floating on the top push the soup's zest appeal over the edge
- Chunky guacamole — mashed SlimCados become the party favorite of the buffet table.
- Sandwiches or hamburgers — diced into sandwich spreads or sliced thin to top the dish, these green-skinned avocados make bagged lunches hard to beat.
- SlimCado bowls — cut in half and filled with your favorite seafood salad.
- Finally, there's the simple joy of a Florida avocado cut in half with just a squeeze of lime on top and eaten with a spoon.

So it's official, avocados aren't just for parties. Any meal can be made into a little celebration with SlimCados. Besides being lower in fat and calories, these Florida avocado are also rich in vitamin A, high in potassium and cholesterol-free. SlimCados are not genetically modified — they come by these characteristics naturally.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- **Think big at the beginning of the season. Big displays, big signs alert the SlimCado aficionado that their favorite avocado is back in season. As the season progresses, create small multiple displays to cross-merchandise with bagged salads and guacamole ingredients.**
- **Promotional volumes are available in mid-July for the SlimCado 12-count, just in time for a healthy addition to barbeque menus. In August, it's the 10-count that reaches promotional volumes.**
- **The tailgate parties of fall always welcome avocado salads, guacamole or a Florida version of the Caprese salad with SlimCado slices partnering with mozzarella and tomatoes.**

PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Make a big splash in mid-July to kick off the SlimCado season. Look for promotional volumes of 12-count fruit in July and 10-count in August — just in time for chopping up into salads that make their yearly debut during summer barbeques.

Garnish in-store cooked food demonstrations with a piece of Slimcado. The food's heat will slightly melt the SlimCado for an added treat.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Your consumers want to know if this large avocado is GMO; it's not. You'll pique their interest by letting them know how this avocado has less fat and fewer calories.* They'll be glad to know it's grown in the U.S.A and has been by Brooks for over 80 years. It's a lot to put on a sign, use our QR code for consumers to scan a download a SlimCado smartphone website for all the details.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Display enough to sell in one day, roughly 15 to 30 pieces (depending on the traffic in your store). When replenishing, rotate any leftover day-old fruit to the front.

Remember, avocados are sensitive to ethylene.

OPTIMUM SHELF LIFE

Brooks' Continuous Cold Chain® keeps SlimCados at their best from the field to your store. The first link in the chain is the hydro-cooling that is done immediately after harvesting. Hydro-cooling takes the tropical heat out while keeping the fruit's freshness in. The chain continues with these green-skinned avocados being stored in dedicated coolers set at optimum temperature and humidity levels. The final link is the refrigerated loading docks that allow SlimCados to be shipped to your store at optimum freshness.

As the largest grower, packer and shipper of green-skinned avocados, Brooks Tropicals has a reputation for delivering this fruit with the best shelf-life. SlimCados have approximately a 4-day shelf life with the fruit being ready to eat for another one to two days.

QUICK TIPS

1. Your customer may expect the SlimCado to turn black — like other avocados — as they ripen. SlimCados stay green. If you can give it a squeeze and it gives a little, it's ready to eat. If it gives a lot, it's ready for guacamole.

2. Keep SlimCados cool but not cold. To ripen, keep them at room temperatures.

3. To ripen faster, put in a paper bag. To ripen even faster, put in a paper bag with an apple or a banana.

4. For additional nutritional information and recipes: www.brookstropicals.com/SlimCado.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Store SlimCados by keeping their environment cool and humid, between 42° and 48° F. Do not store below 40° F. Optimum humidity is between 85 percent and 95 percent.

SlimCados are UPC/PLU-coded and boxed in flats, doubles and bruces.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Add SlimCados to your avocado section and give your customers a choice of great avocado tastes. But don't stop there. Place SlimCados near other salad ingredients. These green-skinned avocados make delicious sense in salads. When the avocados are displayed near bagged salads, your shoppers have a quick and easy way to make their salads special.

When you're rounding up ingredients for your guacamole display, make sure to include SlimCados for a fresh-tasting dish.

Merchandise Florida avocados, targeting your South and Central American customers. This is the avocado of choice for many Hispanic dishes.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Available July though January, Florida avocados are generally pear-shaped and green-skinned. Their weight can vary from 14 ounces to a hefty 34 ounces. The avocado will vary in size from four to 12 inches long and up to six inches wide.

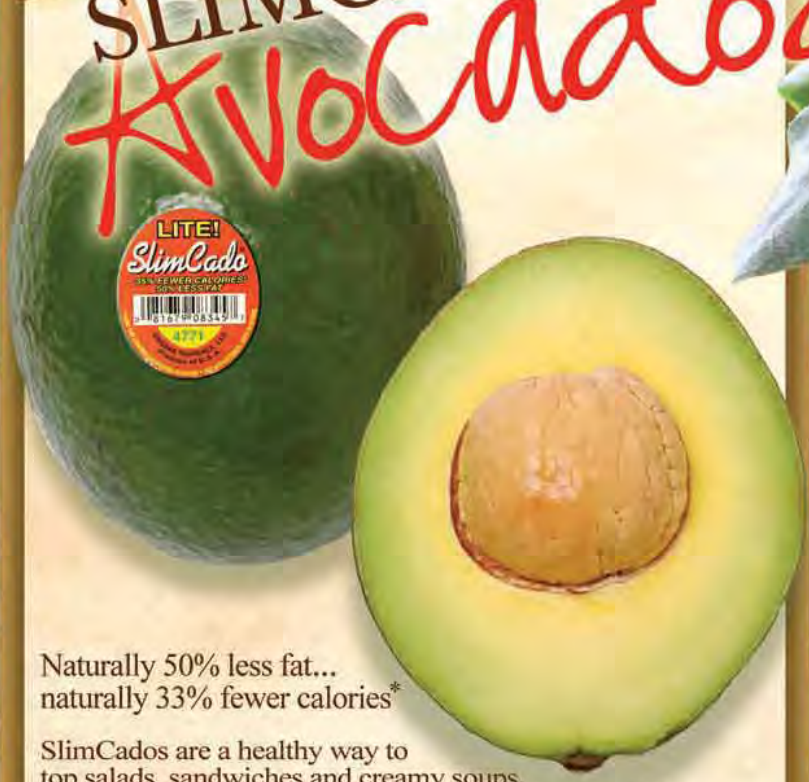
SlimCado fields, harvesting crews, packing house and distribution center are all audited for food safety by Primus Labs, a third party auditor.

**50% less fat and 35% fewer calories than the leading California avocado.*

SlimCado, Continuous Cold Chain and the Brooks Tropicals logo are registered trademarks of Brooks Tropicals, LLC.

FROM OUR AVOCADO FIELDS TO YOUR STORES

SLIMCADO® Avocados



Naturally 50% less fat...
naturally 33% fewer calories*

SlimCados are a healthy way to top salads, sandwiches and creamy soups. SlimCados are the green-skinned avocados with sell-thru, coming by that reputation with a lot of hard work:

- In-house research and development
- Hydro-cooled straight from the field
- Food safety-audited fields, harvesting crews, packing and shipping facilities
- Quality control team
- Continuous Cold Chain® from our fields to your stores

Primus Labs™
when food safety counts

All that hard work delivers quality — SlimCado avocados with great taste and proven shelf life. Call today to get SlimCado avocados coming your way.

*compared to the leading California avocado

BROOKS TROPICALS®
GROWER • PACKER • SHIPPER

800.327.4833 • Fax: 305.246.5827
www.brookstropicals.com

© Brooks Tropicals LLC. The Light Yellow Skin & Contoured Shape Design is a registered trademark of Brooks Tropicals LLC

DOLE
One Dole Avenue
Westlake Village, CA 91362
Phone: 818-874-4000 • Fax: 818-874-6501
Web: www.dole.com/bananas

DOLE ENCOURAGES AMERICANS TO "PEEL THE LOVE" IN 2013

Dole's upcoming "*Peel the Love*" campaign represents everything there is to love about DOLE Bananas: their sun-shiny color, sweet taste, nutritional goodness, affordability and peel-ability. Like unwrapping a present, peeling a banana feels special every time. That's why from classic snacking to new and different 'nana ideas, *Peel the Love* unwraps the potential and versatility of our favorite yellow fruit all summer long. It seeks to teach Americans there is a lot more to bananas than to have them for breakfast or an out-of-hand snack and to ultimately create new sustainable banana habits.

DOLE'S PEEL THE LOVE FOOD TRUCK

Throughout the summer Dole will tour a *Peel the Love* food truck in the streets of banana loving cities across the US. The tour will inspire consumers with a new-found, broader understanding of how the DOLE Bananas they love can be incorporated into delicious-easy-to-make recipes where they work, shop and play, (i.e. workplace intercepts, retail locations, and lifestyle events). Consumers will enjoy entertainment, giveaways, and a nutritious break from the day.

These grassroots efforts and on-site interactions capitalize on the trends of food truck popularity and culinary interest and will integrate into *Peel the Love* social media and public relations campaigns to engage communities and virally expand the reach of DOLE Banana's new usage message.

Dole will work with retailers across the country to develop in-store promotions, point-of-sale materials, sampling events and other activities that support the summer truck tour to teach consumers there is a lot more to our favorite yellow fruit.

Your Dole representative can provide materials and help you schedule a *Peel the Love* food truck retailer visit during the campaign.

© 2012. TM & ® Dole Food Company, Inc. • www.dole.com

Dole leads the way in nutritional education, helping consumers to achieve a healthy lifestyle.

The DOLE brand is synonymous with high quality and safety standards for fresh fruit and vegetables.

A family of Growing companies.℠

GRIMMWAY FARMS

PO Box 81498
Bakersfield, CA 93380
Phone: 661-845-9435
Web: www.grimmway.com

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Carrots have become the "go-to" vegetable of the produce department. As the snacking category continues to grow in popularity, there are an entire host of opportunities to display carrots. From the traditional whole carrots, to bunch carrots, and through the value-added set — baby-carrots, carrot chips, shredded carrots, and microwaveable petites, the merchandising opportunities are endless.

The goal for merchandising is to drive the time-starved consumer to the value-added set in the carrot category. Traditionally, carrots were merchandised in a block format that included all carrots from A – Z. Today, one should focus on merchandising the value-added carrots toward the entrance of the refrigerated set next to the bagged salads and premium dressings. This optimization highlights the occasion- based elements of carrots. Consumers can purchase the shredded carrots as a topping for their salad, purchase a bag of carrot chips to dip with their dressing, or simply purchase a bag of seasoned microwaveable petites to complement the protein they purchased for dinner.

The occasion-based strategy holds true for the bunched and whole carrots. These carrots are usually consumed as an ingredient in your favorite soups or as the side vegetable to your family's pot roast. Since the purchase intent is centered on cooking, whole carrots offer the perfect complement to the bunching greens, celery, and other deep colored vegetables in this set. This strategy optimizes consumer purchases while introducing them to other vegetables, as well as offering a vivid color break within the set.

QUICK TIPS

1. Offer a complete selection of value-added Grimmway carrot products.
2. Promote the healthful attributes of carrots.
3. Highlight carrots through seasonal promotions and secondary displays.
4. Key in on value and diversity of occasion usage of carrots.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE MESSAGING

As many retailers have implemented clean-store policies prohibiting point-of-purchase signage, this is a misssed opportunity in communicating with consumers. Twenty-eight percent of today's consumers don't know how to cook, while other consumers struggle with trying new carrot dishes outside of their comfort zones. Point-of-purchase materials allow for effective communication on fresh meal solutions, nutritional messaging, as well as creative calls to action, such as, "Just Crunch 'Em."

The return of in-store signage is an effective way to merchandise carrots. Grimmway Farms can provide retailers with customized point-of-sale materials.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Develop interactive contest/sweepstakes that require the consumers to visit your social media channels.
- Share successful lifestyle stories that encourage others to develop healthy eating and snacking habits.
- Develop in-store creative display contests a few times a year around key occasions. Back-to-School can feature a special secondary display that promotes carrots as the perfect lunch-time snack.
- Make QR recipe codes readily available offering a variety of recipes and craft ideas.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE:

Grimmway California carrots are available year-round with consistent quality. California's abundant sunshine and premium growing regions produce approximately 85 percent of the nation's carrots.

PROMOTIONAL ADVERTISING IDEAS

Evaluate your category insights to develop a strategic promotional plan by quarter. Grimmway Farms can assist you with this plan through our enhanced insights that analyze the 4Ps (product assortment, price, placement, and promotion). Through this detailed diagnostic, together we can develop a quarterly promotional plan to optimize your carrot set.

Develop a creative promotional campaign focusing on the latest trends. As our population aspires to live healthy lifestyles, create interactive campaigns that move the consumers to your category. *The Biggest Loser* branding offers an interactive nutrition platform allowing the consumers to participate in weight loss challenges alongside their favorite characters on the show. This is one example of a compelling way to draw participation to the category.

DISPLAY CARE HANDLING

With bulk carrots, maintain temperatures from 33˚ to 35˚ F with relative humidity of 98 to 100 percent. Bulk carrots can be lightly misted, but are ethylene-sensitive and should not be stored or transported with ethylene-producing items as they give carrots an off flavor.

The tops of bunched carrots should be fluffed to maintain air circulation. Beware that the tops draw moisture from the carrots themselves and will cause these carrots to have a shorter shelf-life.

The whitening of carrots is caused from the air within drying the outer cells, otherwise known as oxidation, of the peeled carrots. Soak the peeled carrots in ice water to bring the freshness and brilliance back to the carrot.

Proper handling of the cold chain throughout the distribution channel is crucial to extending the shelf-life of processed carrots.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

The cross-merchandising opportunities are endless. Offer on-packe coupons that promote savings across the premium dressing, dairy, premium juice, and meat department categories. Participate in licensing agreements that allow you to cross-promote with DVD releases that promote the retailer's electronics section. Cross-promotions with storage containers and/or cooking utensils are also very effective.

GRIMMWAY FARMS

BRINGING INSIGHT & INNOVATION TO THE TABLE

Grimmway keeps a close finger on the pulse of today's consumer. That's how we give you the best, most innovative carrot products on the market as well as the newest, most creative ways to sell them.

5 Multi Pack-Carrot Dippers®

Creamy Ranch Dip in every Package

View our video

A Family Farm

CATEGORY MANAGEMENT · SERVICE · PLANNING

WWW.GRIMMWAY.COM . 661.845.9435

You Tube

CHELAN FRESH MARKETING
PO Box 878
Chelan WA 98816
Phone: 509-682-2539 • Fax: 509-682-2651
Web: www.ChelanFresh.com

Northwest cherries are mainly an impulse item, which makes merchandising very important. Even though the Northwest cherry season lasts only about eight weeks, these cherries can actually outsell other produce items that are available year-round. Cherry consumption continues to increase, and retailers can take advantage of their growing popularity by properly displaying, handling and promoting this highly profitable item.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

A large, high quality display is the base of profitable cherry sales. Display cherries in your high traffic area. Allow ample shelf space in that high-traffic area and steadily rotate your supplies during the course of the day.

Remember, a display doesn't have to be mounded to look BIG! Use false-bottom boxes to avoid crushing fruit (especially the delicate Rainiers)! You can also display bulk Northwest cherries in the shipping cases.

Caution should be used in filling displays. Avoid dumping new cherries on top of old cherries as they sell down or you'll end up with spoiled cherries at the bottom of the display or box. As well, don't dump sold-down cherries over new boxes. Older cherries may not look as good as they should, and customers may pass by the entire display. Cherries should never be displayed where sunlight can shine on them. As temperatures warm, fruit becomes soft and stems quickly brown and dry out.

Offering a mix of Dark Sweet and Rainier in the display, including different packaging options, will give consumers additional choices and spur extra sales. Pack types include slider bags and clamshells. Disney brand cherries are a great product to market to kids and include the "Check it Out" seal of approval to let concerned parents know the health benefits of each product. These convenient packs are easy to handle and display, extend shelf-life and reduce shrink.

Maintaining an ample supply of cherries is critical for a successful cherry season. A successful cherry plan should include securing supplies from early June into early August. Order adequate supplies to avoid out-of-stock situations. Pre-booking will help ensure adequate supply and strong promotions.

QUICK TIPS

1. Offer in-store sampling, especially with Rainiers.
2. Display in a prime location to increase impulse buys.
3. Use secondary displays to capture impulse sales at checkout.
4. Promote freezing . . .cross-merchandise with freezer bags.
5. Pre-book to ensure adequate supply and strong promotions.

CARE AND HANDLING

Handle cherries with utmost care to avoid bruising and check displays frequently to remove bruised fruit and rotate product. Good quality, good looking cherries will practically sell themselves!

Cherries should be kept cool and dry! Refrigerated displays maintain quality; however, cherries absorb water and will soften if sprinkled so keep them off the wet rack. Cherries lose more quality in one hour at 68˚F (20˚C) than in 24 hours at 32˚F (0˚C). Optimum storage conditions are 32˚ Fahrenheit (0˚C) and 90 percen to 95 percent humidity. Under these conditions, fresh cherries will keep for several days.

Cherries should be kept in the retail cold room until they're ready to be displayed. Refrigerate display supplies overnight or properly rotate supplies and put cherries back into the cold room in the evening.

Further customer satisfaction and repeat sales by training baggers to place cherries at the top of the grocery bag to prevent bruising. Satisfied customers will return to buy again and again!

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Disney brand cherries help moms move the 'nag' factor from the candy isle. Grow future sales by influencing the emerging taste of the young.
- Use Chelan Fresh's promotional packaging highlighting the healthy benefits of cherries and incorporating posters and POS cards.
- Capitalize on cherries' limited season to create exciting "get it now" promotions.

Capitalize on the added value to consumers brought by Disney temporary tattoos for kids, included in Disney brand cherries.

PROMOTION

Retailers should focus on the 73 percent of customers who reportedly don't purchase cherries. The best way to win this business is by getting the fruit in their mouths through sampling. Demos will win customers back or introduce the fruit to consumers for the first time.

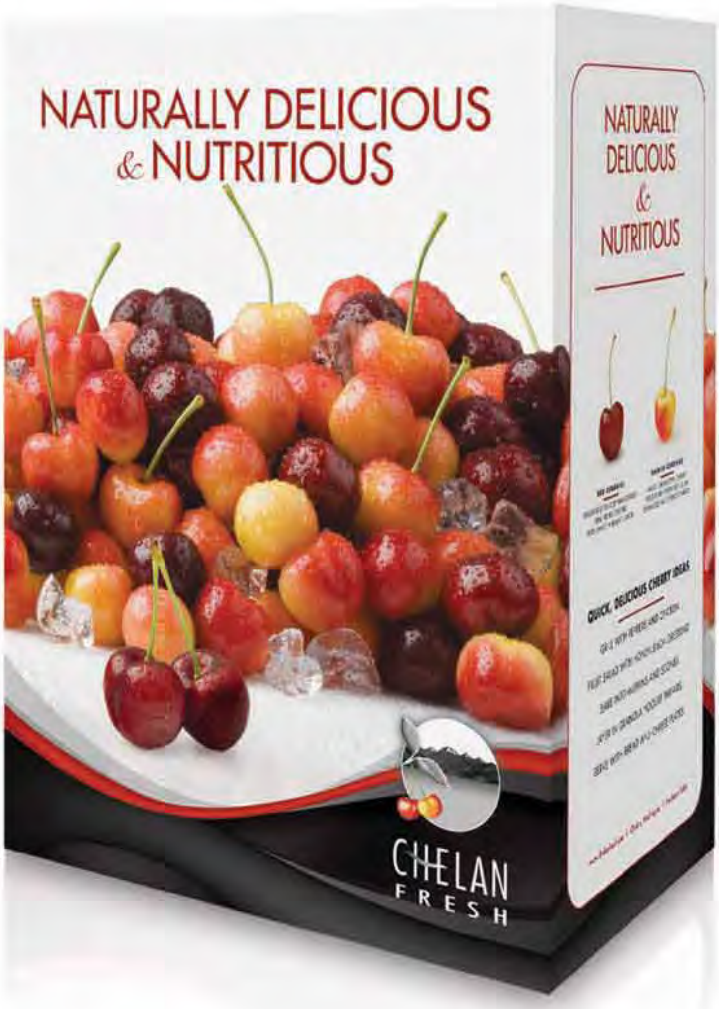
Capitalize on the excitement of one of the few seasonal products left in the department. The limited availability of cherries allows a fantastic opportunity for retailers to promote a "get-it-before-it's-gone" product.

Promoting the health aspects of cherries will increase the fruit's appeal to several health-conscious consumer segments, including the elderly and parents. Stores can also take advantage of new cherry sleeves, which include POS information on new and interesting uses for cherries in cooking, baking and serving.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Northwest cherries are available from early June to mid-August and include the Sonata, Sweetheart, Rainier, Lapins, and Bing varieties.

PROVEN PROGRAMS. PREMIUM FRUIT.



Chelan Fresh doesn't just grow the world's best cherries, we know how to sell them.
We offer our customers more programs, more fruit, and more profit.

BROWSE OUR PRODUCE & PROGRAMS
www.chelanfresh.com **CALL 509-682-4252**

CHELAN
FRESH
MARKETING

BOOTH RANCHES LLC

12201 Avenue 480
Orange Cove, CA 93646
Phone: 559-626-7653
Web: www.boothranches.com
Email: info@boothranchesllc.com

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

A large display of oranges is always an attention getter when the consumer enters the produce department. It's hard to miss the bright orange color, and catching the consumers' eye means catching their purchase. Comparatively speaking, oranges are always a real value, and therefore are always a good mover especially in slower economic times. Consumers appreciate the value.

Don't forget about a second display with bags. Some consumers prefer to pick each piece individually, but others enjoy the convenience of bagged oranges. Also, bags always lead to a nice ring at the register and less sales per carton than with the bulk fruit.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Booth Ranches offers several Point of Purchase options to help stimulate movement at retail. Booth offers a dynamic high graphic bin that is a real attention getter and a great way to build a secondary display outside of the produce department. No room for a full bin? No problem! Booth also offers a smaller pop-up display half bin that will hold two boxes of fruit with the same distinctive graphics as our full bin, but easily set up in a smaller area. The pop up is also great for waterfall displays. Another option is our high graphic black carton which is great for building displays on existing shelving or to use freestanding.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- **Set up secondary displays in high traffic areas like near front registers or in the dairy department to encourage extra impulse sales!**

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Oranges from California are available almost year round. Booth Ranches Navels are in the market from November through June, and Valencia's are available from April through September. They can be promoted in winter and summer.

In the winter, there's nothing that beats a delicious Booth Ranches California Navel. While there are also Navels from the Southern Hemisphere in summer months, a sweet and juicy California Valencia is a great, lower priced alternative customers will appreciate.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Because of the generally competitive price, oranges make a great promotional item any time of year. They are especially attractive for promotion in mid-winter, when a slice of sunshine is a welcome change for consumers in many areas. Their value, however, suggests that an ad is a profitable idea any time of year, including during summer when Valencia's are in season. They offer great value!

Promotions should include large displays, and perhaps even a second display elsewhere in the store. Place a Booth Ranches high graphic bin at the entrance to the store for a display that really generates sales.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Oranges are ripe and ready to eat as soon as your customer picks them up. Unlike some other produce items, there's no need to wait for ripening, and Booth Ranches oranges are specially selected for their premium flavor. The only oranges we pack and sell are ones we grow ourselves, giving us incredible control and consistency.

QUICK TIPS

1. **At busy times of the day, oranges can move pretty fast so make sure displays are well filled and fresh.**
2. **Promote value of oranges.**
3. **Offer bagged as well as bulk.**

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Like all produce, oranges will display better and last longer if the temperature is properly maintained. They are a relatively hearty piece of fruit, so they can be easily displayed on a dry table but should be refrigerated whenever possible.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

There are lots of opportunities to cross-merchandise oranges with other items. A display of oranges with electric or manual juicers will drive the sales of both. How about a display in the beer aisle near the Blue Moon? A small display of oranges near the leaf items can suggest a citrus salad. In the meat or seafood department, fresh orange juice can be suggested as part of a fantastic glaze.

Quality has an old family name.

Experience the Booth Ranches legacy.

A descendent of one of California's oldest families, Otis Booth, Jr. started Booth Ranches in 1957 with 40 acres in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas in Central California. Today, Booth Ranches is still family owned and operated, farming 8,300 acres from Orange Cove to Maricopa. Our customers have known Booth Ranches as a consistent supplier of premium California oranges. We take great pride in delivering only the best from our family to yours.

Call 559.626.7653 or email info@boothranchesllc.com to learn more.

Booth Ranches, LLC
Orange Cove, CA 93646
559.626.7653
www.boothranches.com

BOOTH RANCHES
ESTABLISHED 1957

Masters of Merchandising

Bard Valley NATURAL DELIGHTS FRESH MEDJOOL DATES

DATEPAC LLC
2515 S. Ave. 2½ E, Suite #1
Yuma, AZ 85365
Phone: 928-726-9191 • Fax: 928-726-9413
Web: www.naturaldelights.com

SOMETHING SWEET TO CHEW ON

There is a reason the naturally sweet Medjool date has been called the "King of fruits." Medjool dates are regarded as the date variety with the richest taste, softest texture and perfect size.

Quite simply, there is no other date quite like the Medjool, and there is no Medjool with as high a quality and carefully cultivated as the Bard Valley Natural Delights Medjool.

The unique micro-climate in the Bard Valley is warmed by the ever-present sun and nourished by a high water table, making it the best place to grow these timeless delicacies. And of course, the loving care lavished on our Bard Valley Medjools by our family farmers is unmatched, earning them the famous Natural Delights name.

VITALITY SEEKERS

Dates are more than just good for you. They're perfect. And that's why dates are popular among health-conscious, active and adventure-seeking consumers. We like to refer to date-purchasers as "vitality seekers," because this group seeks for ways to express themselves through interesting foods that also support their active-lifestyles, boosting their bodies and restoring vitality daily.

Medjools are the perfect active, healthy food because they are:

- Rich in antioxidant polyphenols with more antioxidants per serving than blueberries
- Good source of fiber, potassium and other minerals
- Low on the glycemic index scale
- Fat- and cholesterol-free
- Great for both snacking and using as an ingredient in recipes
- Do not require refrigeration and have a conveniently long shelf-life

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

• Host a "smart snacking" demonstration and feature snack pack dates alongside other on-the-go value-added products that are as delicious as they are nutritious.

• Merchandise "Power Pregnancy" fresh produce items that appeal to expectant mothers.

• Host a tasting demo during the holidays showcasing dates stuffed and baked with delicious ingredients such as pecans and gorgonzola cheese for enlightened appetizer ideas.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

The shelf-stable nature of dates makes display possibilities endless. Since we know that date-purchasers are health-conscious consumers who enjoy fresh foods, it is ideal to display dates with other fresh fruits known for their richness in vitamins and minerals.

Other display ideas include placing dates next to convenience-package fresh snacks, pre-cut fruit or chilled health drinks. It is always beneficial to make good use of shippers to display dates during key consumption periods.

POINT OF PURCHASE

Dates are considered a delicacy, but also a healthy and energizing snack. Key messages to include on store signage should include:

- Ideal for healthy snacking
- High in fiber, potassium and antioxidants
- A delicious sweet treat
- Delectable either fresh or in easy-to-prepare recipes
- Excellent source of sustained energy for active lifestyles
- Contains more potassium than bananas and more antioxidants than blueberries
- Do not require refrigeration and can be stored up to a month at room temperature

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Prime selling months for Medjool dates are broken down into six periods:

- January – Health & wellness
- February – Valentine's Day
- April – Easter/Passover
- July – Ramadan
- October – New Crop
- December – Holiday treats

Dates are at top of mind for consumers during these months and serve as the best times to talk about their natural sweetness and traditional use during key holidays. Seasonal header cards on shippers can be used and are highly recommended for these key periods.

Advertising from September through December in areas promoting healthy living has proven effective at garnering up to 16.9 MM impressions. Social media and website can be used to inform consumers about health benefits and supply attractive date recipes that will stimulate trial.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING

The new medjool snack packs are a perfect front end "sweet treat" item, especially when positioned as a healthy snack for children. Dates can also be sold next to sliced bacon in the meat department, blue cheese from the deli or mascarpone and cream cheese from the dairy department, as these are ideal for stuffing and baking with dates. Peanut butter is also a popular dip to pair with dates, and can be grouped with dates and bananas. Take care to merchandise date rolls in shippers in highly trafficked areas as they are ideal for "on-the-go" consumers.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Medjool dates are harvested in September through early October but they are available year-round. Year-round merchandising options have doubled sales in the past five years in North America. Bard Valley Natural Delights Medjool dates are offered in:

- Conventional and Organic 11-lb. bulk PLU box with dates in tamper-resistant sealed tubs
- Snack packs for conventional pitted, coconut, almond, pistachio and chili-lime date rolls

Snack packs are new to 2013 and are ideal for retailers who wish to test the item and broaden their date consumers.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Store Medjool dates in a coolor away from all moisture. Dates must be kept cool but dry in order to enhance shelf-life and ensure consumers have the best taste experience. Shelf-life is 30 days at room temperature or cooler. When it's time to put out a new box, it's recommended that the inventory that remains in the old box be pitted, sliced, diced and sampled.

Dates can be frozen, but it's recommended they are maintained in a 40 degree cooler.

Bard Valley

NATURAL DELIGHTS

FRESH MEDJOOL DATES

SOMETHING SWEET TO CHEW ON

5X INCREMENTAL SALES INCREASE

THE #1 BRAND IN THE MEDJOOL DATE CATEGORY

Natural Delights Medjool Dates and Date Rolls can help you generate 3x, 4x or even 5x incremental sales when you merchandise with secondary displays and advertising during the most profitable date-selling times of the year. Easter and Passover are near and so is demand for Natural Delights Medjool Dates and Date Rolls!

To help boost sales during peak seasons, five seasonal header cards are available: brand (year round), Easter/Passover (shown right), Ramadan, Winter Holidays and Valentine's.

Order your shippers today to boost your Easter and Passover sales!

FOR ORDERS CONTACT
DAVE NELSON
928-726-9191
DNELSON@DATEPAC.COM

Learn more about the world's original and still most perfect treat at **naturaldelights.com**.

SUN DRIED MARKETING INC.
Phone: 559-824-8474 • Fax: 559-432-0535
Web: greengiantfresh.com
Email: john@sundriedmarketing.com

Dried fruit is a foundational category for any produce department and continues to increase in popularity and profits as more consumers focus on healthy eating and snacking.

Raisins come from seedless green grapes that are dried in the warm California sun.

The sun drying process gives raisins their characteristic deep color, texture and sweet taste. Raisins are a healthy, natural and ready-to-eat snack for moms and kids on the go.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Raisins are available year round.

Raisins come in a variety of resealable bags, canisters and boxes to suit all snacking and baking needs. Green Giant® Fresh raisins are sold in:

- mini-boxes
- a six-ounce pack of small boxes
- bulk packs in a 12-ounce zip bag
- a 15-ounce box, and
- a 24-ounce canister

Like many other Green Giant Fresh products, each package of raisins displays the Box Tops for Education® coupon, allowing moms and others in the community to help raise money for their local schools.

CARE AND HANDLING

- Store unopened raisins at room temper-ature. Refrigerate any opened containers.
- Raisins require no special preparation.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Promote raisins as a colorful addition to slaws and lettuce salads. Raisins also make a great back to school tie-ins, holiday baking, summer time promotions and additions to fruit and vegetable trays. Highlight products featuring the Box Tops for Education coupon and use signage to remind the customer that their purchase helps them raise money for their local schools. Cross-merchandise near other fresh fruit like grapes, bananas and berries for a healthy fruit salad.

Cross-merchandise with yogurt, peanut butter and celery — kids enjoy making their own snacks!

QUICK TIPS

1. Promote mini snack boxes and the larger 6-pack boxes as fun treats for lunchboxes and school snacks.

2. Advertise as a healthy, delicious and convenient snack for adults trying to stay in shape!

3. Advertise Green Giant Fresh's mobile marketing campaign, which offers shoppers the ability to scan a QR code using their smart phone. The scan instantly provides shoppers real time information about the grower, product, farm and healthy recipes we offer.

Green Giant® Fresh

Sweet Taste!

OFFICIAL BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION BRAND

Sweet Deal for Schools!

Sun Dried Marketing and Green Giant® Fresh are proud to announce the release of our Green Giant® Fresh Raisins available in resealable bags, canisters, and boxes. The most exciting of all is Green Giant® Fresh Raisins are packaged with Box Tops For Education®.

Help kids earn cash for their schools!

24oz Canister

6-1.5oz Boxes

12oz Bag

15oz Box

14-0.5oz Boxes

Box Tops for Education, Green Giant, the Green Giant character, and related words and designs are trademarks of General Mills–used under license. ©2012 General Mills

Sun Dried Marketing, Inc. I Fresno, California I 559.824.8474 I john@sundriedmarketing.com

APIO, INC.
PO Box 727
Guadalupe, CA 93434
Phone: 800.454.1335 • Fax: 805-343-6295
Web: www.apioinc.com
Email: info@apioinc.com

Apio is the recognized supplier of value-added fresh-cut vegetables and the retail category's growth leader, offering two of the strongest brands in fresh-cut vegetables. The GreenLine® brand leads sales of fresh-cut green beans within the U.S., and Eat Smart® is the leader in fresh-cut branded bag and tray sales. Together, Apio brands account for 13 percent of fresh-cut vegetable sales. Contact us to learn more.

QUALITY ASSURANCE — FROM FIELD TO FORK

From our post-harvest physiologists and on-premises microbiological lab to our annual third-party food safety and quality audits, complete HACCP program, vendor approval program, GAP and GMP/Food Safety Training Programs, to being a California Leafy Greens Agreement signatory, Apio's team has implemented an extensive quality assurance and food safety program designed to minimize food safety risks and ensure top-of-our-field quality — from field to fork.

RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Fresh-cut vegetables should be received from adequately refrigerated trucks and transferred immediately into storage ideally cooled to 34° to 36° F. Shelves should be well stocked and products culled with attention to code date.

CAPITALIZING ON FRESH-CUT VEGETABLES' HOLIDAY POPULARITY

Fresh-cut vegetable sales peak at various times throughout the year. Carrying adequate supply is essential during these weeks.

Cross-merchandising value-added vegetables with their bulk counterparts (e.g. fresh-cut broccoli merchandised next to bulk broccoli) can entice shoppers to trade up and lead to higher basket rings.

Value-added Vegetable	Peak Sales Week
Bagged Slaw:	Fourth of July
Broccoli:	Christmas
Cauliflower:	St. Patrick's Day and Thanksgiving
Trays:	Super Bowl, Easter, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas

Given the greater appeal of trays throughout the year, holiday or event themed trays can provide a point of differentiation and catch the attention of additional shoppers.

HOW DOES ITEM COUNT STACK UP?

Nationally, an average of 32 unique fresh-cut vegetable items are carried per store, per week.

Side Dish:	18
Meal Prep:	7
Snacking:	5
Trays:	3

Specifically for trays, the ideal assortment includes one large tray (32-ounces or larger) and two small tray (8-ounces - 32-ounces) items.

THE FRESH-CUT VEGETABLE CONSUMER

Fresh-cut vegetables appeal most to premium, healthy-living couples and families. These consumers tend to cook fresh home meals, but they value products that serve as meal starters. Apio's Steam in the Bag feature is ideal for these core consumers, as they can eat fresh vegetable side dishes at home with minimal preparation.

FRESH-CUT VEGETABLE HOUSEHOLD PENETRATION

AVG. FRESH-CUT VEGETABLE BASKET SIZE

PROMOTIONS IN FRESH-CUT VEGETABLES

CIRCULAR AD COUNT

CIRCULAR AD MIX

AVG. VOLUME % LIFT ON PROMOTION

85% increase +
+4 pts from 2011

Fresh-cut vegetables' volume sales increase on average 85 percent when on promotion. Promoting these options during their holiday peaks can help attract even more incremental sales.

*Sourcing: Consumer Data Source: Nielsen Perishables Group FreshFacts® Shopper Insights Powered by Spire • Performance Data Source: Nielsen Perishables Group FreshFacts®; *Not including packaged salads*

Apio, INC.

APIO OFFERS YOU

THE BEST IN FRESH-CUT.

Apio continues to invest in and build platforms for success with our retailer partners. Today we bring you two top selling brands from one company - Eat Smart® and GreenLine®. Our brands offer improved category leadership with innovative products and superior sourcing all with a national reach. Carrying the best in fresh-cut just got easier.

Eat Smart and GreenLine are registered trademarks of Apio, Inc.

Contact us today to learn more | www.apioinc.com | Eat Smart - 800.454.1355 | GreenLine - 419.353.2326

Eat Smart GreenLine

AuerPAK BRAND

MAURICE A AUERBACH, INC.
117 Seaview Drive
Secaucus, NJ 07094
Phone: 201-807-9292 • 888-AUERPAK
Fax: 201-807-9596
Web: www.auerpak.com

Garlic lies at the confluence of all that is hot and happening in produce. Ethnic cuisines? Garlic is key. Health-oriented eaters? Garlic is prominent. Dieters? Use garlic instead of salted butter anytime. The product family runs the gamut from staple to specialty items — red garlic, elephant garlic, peeled, packaged, braided and certified organic.

The category includes both fresh garlic and various processed and semi-processed items, such as whole peeled garlic, chopped garlic, minced garlic and a multitude of jarred products. There are even garlic options that can serve highly decorative purposes such as braided garlic. Garlic can be used to adorn holiday wreaths and other holiday decorations. Many items are sold in both bulk and consumer package sizes.

QUICK TIPS

1. Display and promote a full range of garlic items
2. Use jarred and fresh garlic, red, white, elephant and conventional garlic and garlic braids to make the section intriguing to consumers
3. Focus on increasing usage — the key to increasing sales long term

DISPLAY IDEAS

The key to making good garlic displays is to avoid the specialty jinx in which a small area is set aside for a tiny row, or worse, a little basket of garlic. Instead, think of the romance of garlic: The Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all knew of garlic, and this rich heritage carries through to the cuisines of today, justifying generous space with a full range of garlic products displayed. It is well worth it to cultivate a garlic-buying clientele because garlic is never consumed alone. So every sale of garlic means the sale of other items both in produce and in other areas of the store.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- **Do a bakery demo in which roasted garlic is served with sliced French baguettes. The mild flavor will make it a favorite with many consumers and you can emphasize the health aspect — no fat or butter!**
- **Educate customers about the taste benefits of rubbing the outside of their Easter lamb with cracked garlic prior to roasting.**
- **Provide recipes encouraging customers to insert whole peeled garlic cloves into slits cut with the point of a sharp knife into their holiday roasts prior to cooking. Watch your garlic (and meat) sales take off!**
- **Hold a sauce competition in which consumers make homemade pasta sauce using garlic. Get a local newspaper to judge it and have the winning sauce recipes be part of a "saucy special."**

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Signage and POP material near garlic should always have a three-fold message:

First, make sure to highlight variety items, such as elephant garlic; this attracts attention to the overall garlic section and sparks consumer interest.

Second, always highlight the health benefits of garlic: fat-free, saturated fat-free, sodium-free, cholesterol-free and certified 100 percent organic are all watchwords that are permissible with garlic and attract the interest of health-oriented consumers.

Third, always provide recipes and usage ideas.

Garlic sales directly relate to consumer use of recipes requiring garlic, so always have a recipe next to the garlic display. Also remember that a festive arrangement of garlic braids functions as great signage to bring attention to the garlic display.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Garlic is available year-round with supplies coming from California and outside of the United States, including Argentina, Mexico, Chile and Spain. In recent years, Chinese-grown garlic has become prominent in the marketplace. Its use as both a seasoning and an ingredient in food means that year-round promotion is appropriate.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Because of its comparatively long storage life, deep discounts on garlic are likely to steal sales from future periods. Therefore, the focus in garlic promotion should be on usage. If it is barbeque season, promote the use of garlic in salads, marinades and rubs. Suggest that consumers try cooking whole garlic on the barbeque and serve it whole as a butter substitute. If the Super Bowl or another sporting event is coming up, promotions can focus on the use of fresh garlic to make salsa with a kick.

Salad dressing is another great garlic application. Have a salad dressing of the month that is always under promotion and always uses garlic. Suggest ways that garlic can add flare to old favorites. Garlic mashed potatoes, for example, are a great way to jazz up a dish that may have grown boring. And at major holidays, suggest adding an ethnic dish. For example, it is an old Italian custom to serve a fish dish, almost always prepared with garlic, at major holidays. Use the trend to ethnic food, healthful eating and variety to tie in garlic.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Garlic should not be misted, and rotation is important since fresh garlic sitting out for long periods will tend to dry out. In addition, the skins of garlic tend to shed with handling so frequent attention to the display to keep it clean and dry will result in better sales.

BACKROOM RECEIVING

Garlic should be stored in a cool, well-ventilated place and kept dry.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Garlic is a cross-merchandiser's dream as it is always used in conjunction with other products. Cross-promote in the produce department with salad items since garlic is frequently tossed into salads as an ingredient as well as used in salad dressing. Put garlic next to ripe tomatoes, basil, cilantro, etc., to promote salsa. Suggest a make-your-own-pasta-sauce center with garlic, tomatoes and other ingredients.

Also consider secondary displays of garlic next to meat and poultry to promote as a rub and even next to baguettes in the bakery, promoting roasted garlic as a delicious and healthful alternative to butter.

We Just Keep Getting Better...

Maurice A. Auerbach, Inc.

Top Quality Produce, Superior Service, New State-Of-The-Art Distribution Center

42,000 SQUARE FEET OF REFRIGERATED SPACE

CUSTOM REPACKING

COLD CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Call 888-Auerpak

Paul Auerbach • Jeff Schwartz • Ian Zimmerman
Bruce Klein • Jim Maguire • Josh Auerbach

www.auerpak.com

AuerPAK BRAND

APIO, INC.
PO Box 727
Guadalupe, CA 93434
Phone: 800.454.1335 • Fax: 805-343-6295
Web: www.greenlinefoods.com
Email: info@apioinc.com

Apio is the recognized supplier of value-added fresh-cut vegetables and the retail category's growth leader, offering two of the strongest brands in fresh-cut vegetables. The GreenLine® brand leads sales of fresh-cut green beans within the U.S., and Eat Smart® is the leader in fresh-cut branded bag and tray sales. Together, Apio brands account for 13 percent of fresh-cut vegetable sales. Contact us to learn more.

AMERICA'S #1 PACKAGED GREEN BEANS

GreenLine fresh-cut green beans are America's favorite brand, earning a spot as the highest selling brand of value-added vegetables behind Eat Smart. GreenLine packaging ensures freshness and is microwaveable for the quick-cooking convenience shoppers want.

CAPITALIZE ON FRESH-CUT GREEN BEANS' HOLIDAY POPULARITY

Fresh-cut green beans' sales peak at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Sales nearly triple (compared to an average week) during the week of Thanksgiving and double the week of Christmas. Carrying adequate supply is essential during these holiday weeks.

DISPLAY STRATEGIES THAT WORK

Use eye-catching channel strips or shelf-talkers to draw attention. Generate interest with periodic new sizes and types of green beans, such as GreenLine's 12- and 32-oz. green beans, or 10-oz. organic green beans.

Cross-merchandising fresh-cut green beans with their bulk counterparts (e.g. merchandised next to bulk green beans) during these key holiday weeks can entice shoppers to trade up and lead to higher basket rings.

A POPULAR SIDE DISH

AVAILABLE YEAR-ROUND

FRESH-CUT GREEN BEANS ARE THE FASTEST SELLING FRESH-CUT VEGETABLE!

Fresh-cut green beans have the highest sales velocity of any packaged vegetable*, selling $131 per store, per week — an increase of 5 percent from a year ago!

FRESH-CUT GREEN BEANS PURCHASE PATTERNS

AVG. PRODUCE BASKET

AVG. FRESH-CUT GREEN BEAN BASKET

HOW DOES ASSORTMENT STACK UP?

Nationally, an average of two unique fresh-cut green bean items are carried per store, per week. The two most common package sizes are 12 ounces and 32 ounces.

PACKAGE SIZE SHARE OF SALES

PROMOTIONS IN FRESH-CUT GREEN BEANS

AVG. VOLUME % LIFT ON PROMOTION

95% increase +
+10 pts from 2011

Fresh-cut green bean volume sales increase on average 95 percent when on promotion. Promoting these convenient options during their holiday peaks can help attract even more incremental sales.

*Sourcing: Consumer Data Source: Nielsen Perishables Group FreshFacts® Shopper Insights Powered by Spire • Performance Data Source: Nielsen Perishables Group FreshFacts®; *Not including packaged salads*

GreenLine

THE LEADER IN FRESH-CUT GREEN BEANS.

GreenLine® green beans are the top selling brand of fresh-cut green beans in the nation. We offer a wide variety of fresh green bean blends conveniently washed, trimmed and packaged - ready to steam in the bag or cook in a favorite recipe. Green Line products help you achieve top sales by delivering high quality to consumers.

GreenLine is a registered trademark of Apio, Inc.

Contact us today to learn more | www.apioinc.com | GreenLine - 419.353.2326

Apio, Inc.

HYDROPONICALLY GROWN LIVING BUTTER LETTUCE

HOLLANDIA PRODUCE, LLC
PO Box 1327
Carpenteria, CA 93014
Phone: 805-684-8739 • Fax: 805-684-9363
Web: www.livegourmet.com
Email: info@livegourmet.com

Since 1996, Live Gourmet brand hydroponically grown living butter lettuce has offered an improved category solution for innovative produce merchandisers across America. With its extended shelf-life and protective, interlocking, and easy-to-merchandise clamshell package, Live Gourmet butter lettuce has saved hours of labor and significantly reduced shrink while generating higher dollar rings that create increased gross margins for the butter lettuce category.

LIVE GOURMET BUTTER LETTUCE IS "ABSOLUTELY FRESH BECAUSE IT IS STILL ALIVE!"

By harvesting our butter lettuce with its roots intact, we provide each delectable leaf with a source of nutrition after harvest, helping the leaf remain fresher and more flavorful for days longer than butter lettuce harvested in the conventional manner. Fresher lettuce means higher flavor profiles and greater nutritional value, which generates higher levels of consumer satisfaction and helps drive increased purchase frequency.

Live Gourmet Living Lettuce is pest-free naturally as we utilize integrated pest management (IPM) regimes — a natural, more ecologically sound pest control method. IPM incorporates naturally occurring pest regulators and beneficial predatory insects that reduce harmful insect populations in the growing environment.

LIVE GOURMET ADVANTAGES

- "Absolutely fresh because it's still alive!"
- Consistent uniform product quality year-round
- Naturally pest-fre
- Extended shelf-life and reduced shrink that helps you sell more units
- Attractive, see-through and easy-to-mer-chandise packaging

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

• Be the first in your region to offer a greenhouse-grown section in your produce department. Merchandise greenhouse-grown lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, bell peppers and herbs in one central location.

• Stress the benefits of controlled environment growing, uniform quality and reduced pesticide use to generate cross-selling and upselling of your produce department shoppers.

PACKAGING DEVELOPMENTS

Our new source-reduced and freight-saving Live Gourmet Squircle clamshell package and accompanying harness style master carton allows for a 20 percent increase in units per pallets. The new Squircle clamshell is elegantly redesigned and supremely functional and has won a 2011 PMA Impact Award for excellence in packaging. The Squircle meets and exceeds merchandising, physical protection, food safety, sustainability and transportation packaging criteria for the 21st Century. Additionally, it provides a micro-environment around the lettuce helping it stay fresher longer. The clamshell protects each delicate leaf from physical damage during handling and acts as a food-safety barrier between the product and the consumer. The clamshell's interlocking feature aids in ease of maintaining a presentable, attractive display on your produce section shelf. Just place and replenish the facings daily. Our clamshells are made from post-consumer recyclables and are Level-1 recyclable, a very important feature for most of today's shoppers.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Live Gourmet butter lettuce is truly a value-added offering and can be merchandised successfully in several locations within the produce section of your store. Refrigerated free-standing island displays, end-cap displays and second- and third-level shelving above the wet rack can prove to be excellent merchandising zones, depending upon your store's produce department configuration.

Our research suggests the prime location for our Live Gourmet butter lettuce is directly next to iceberg lettuce in the leafy green section of your produce display. This requires closing of the wet-rack mist system nozzle directly above our product display, thereby eliminating unattractive water spots on the container.

We find that merchandising the product in the bagged salad case is often the area of last resort, and it may lead to buyer confusion. The bagged salad shopper is looking for tear-and-pour convenience, and our product requires processing before use. In every instance, eye-level multiple facings that create attractive displays help generate increased sales velocity for our product.

QUICK TIPS

1. The prime location for our Live Gourmet butter lettuce is directly next to iceberg lettuce in the leafy green section of your produce display.

2. Place and reface frequently; with the clamshell package, daily trimming and product refreshing will be nominal.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Combining offers with other salad ingredients — from croutons to gourmet cheeses and salad dressings — can help acquaint your shoppers with this uniquely fresh butter lettuce.

Promoting your private-label salad dressing in conjunction with our butter lettuce is a great way to generate increased velocity for both categories. Interdepartmental cross-promotional offers, such as a BLT promotion that offers the ingredients for a bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich, can drive traffic to several areas throughout your store.

Use of cents-off coupons for ingredients located at displays of the corresponding items can be used to draw your meat department shopper into your produce section and bakery goods section of the store.

RECEIVING, STORAGE AND HANDLING TIPS

• Maintain the cold chain at all times and observe suggested temperature ranges to extend the product's shelf-life.

• Inspect all shipping cartons for the enjoy-by-date or best-if-used-by date and maintain proper product rotation in the storage cooler and on the store shelf.

• Visually inspect each clamshell during placement on the shelf to ensure your display is the very best it can be.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

• Observe the enjoy-by-date stamped on each package and maintain a proper rotation to insure maximum value for your customer.

• Place and reface frequently; with the clamshell package, daily trimming and product refreshing will be nominal.

Roots Matter!

Because Freshness Matters

We leave the roots intact on our Live Gourmet® products because consumers, as well as independent researchers, have told us that's what makes our lettuce the FRESHEST you can buy... Roots Matter!

So please compare our lettuce for **freshness**, flavor, color, size, weight, and product uniformity. You'll find we offer a very reliable consumer experience with each and every purchase. Best of all, it's a **freshness** that lasts for days and days after harvest, so your customers will keep coming back for more!

Offer Your Customers the Best! Offer Live Gourmet®

Learn More!

Hollandia Produce, LLC PO Box 1327
Carpinteria, California 93014
(805) 684-4146
www.livegourmet.com

Hollandia PRODUCE, LLC

M.L. CATANIA COMPANY LTD.
123 Eastside Drive, Unit 3
Toronto, ON M8Z 5S5
Phone: 416-236-9394
Email: info@cataniaworldwide.com
www.cataniaworldwide.com

STELLAR DISTRIBUTING INC.
21801 Ave 16
Madera, California 93637, USA
Phone: 1-559-664-8400
www.stellardistributing.com

QUICK TIPS

1. Sample, sample, sample. The best way to sell kiwi is to get it into the customer's mouth.
2. Don't throw away culled kiwi. Use it in prepared foods, salad bar or cut-fruit operations.
3. Lengthen shelf-life of ethylene-sensitive kiwi by displaying next to tree fruit, grapes and citrus.

The bright internal color and unique outward appearance of kiwifruit makes it a natural for produce department promotions. Retailers can significantly increase sales of kiwifruit with a little bit of effort as kiwi tends to be an impulse purchase. Making the fruit more visible, doing sampling and providing usage and recipe ideas will all stimulate kiwi sales.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Increase sales with prominent displays of kiwi. Build eye-catching displays in the front of the department and cut a few fruit in half to allow customers to see the enticing inner color.

Capitalize on impulse purchases by placing secondary displays at seafood counter and front checkout of stores. Display kiwi with POS recipe and usage information to give customers additional ideas for using the fruit.

PROMOTION SUGGESTIONS

Take advantage of kiwi's fun appeal to cross-merchandise creatively with salads, drinks, party platters, or other unique applications. Stimulate increased purchases throughout the department with additional tie-in's like bagged salad and feta cheese.

Educate consumers on the simplicity of eating a kiwi by slicing in half and scooping with a spoon. Encourage this usage for snacks or as an accompanying lunch item.

Promote kiwi to children by sampling slices during "mom & kid" shopping times. Encourage parents to use kiwi as a lunch-box or snack item.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEA

Create a Fruit Salad Display including kiwifruit, tree fruit, grapes and citrus and encourage customers to purchase a few of each to combine in a healthy fruit salad.

PROMOTE KIWI NUTRITION

Kiwifruit is a health dream. It is a scientifically recognized "SuperFood", full of vitamins and minerals. Merchandising should focus on promoting good health and fighting disease. The nutrient-dense kiwifruit easily fits into a healthy lifestyle and is low in calories. Focus on these health tips:

- Kiwifruit is high in Vitamin C, an antioxidant that has been shown to fight cancer.
- Kiwifruit is high in potassium, which can help lower blood pressure.
- Kiwifruit is a low-fat source of vitamin E, a rare combination.
- Gold kiwi is a natural, unfortified source of foliate.

The U.S. FDA has approved the following nutrient descriptors for kiwifruit: low-fat, saturated fat-free, sodium free, cholesterol-free, high in fiber, high in vitamin C, a good source of vitamin E, and a good source of potassium.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Kiwifruit comes in two varieties, green and gold. Green kiwi is a tangy-sweet while Gold kiwi has a more tropically-sweet flavor. Kiwifruit is available is available year round principally from Italy, New Zealand, Chile, and California.

HANDLING & STORAGE

Kiwifruit must be handled with care as it will bruise easily. Produce personnel should be instructed not to dump kiwi onto displays, instead placing fruit carefully into displays by hand. Also be cautious not to stack fruit too high as this will cause bruising to fruit on the bottom.

Kiwi is ethylene sensitive and an ethylene producer when ripe. Do not store or display kiwi next to ethylene releasing fruits and vegetables.

Kiwifruit should be stored in the backroom at an ideal temperature of 32°F (0°C) at a relative humidity of 90 to 95%.

Getting you fruit anywhere, anytime...

Always in season

Catania WORLDWIDE

Catania Mexico.
Veracruz, Mexico
+52 232-324-1517
Alejandra Dias Romero

M.L. Catania Co. Ltd
Tel: (416)-236-9394
Fax: (416)-236-3992
Paul Catania • Mario Masellis
Sam Bertucci • Matthew Catania

Stellar Distributing Inc.
Tel: (559)-275-8400
Fax: (559)-275-7594
Kurt Cappelluti • Connie Gil
Brian Lapin • Nick Cappelluti

www.cataniaworldwide.com

Sleek.
Powerful.
Versatile.

Up to 7,000 sparkling
LED lumens delivered in
track, recessed or
pendant options
with the

Alpha H1
by B'A'RO

Limitations Are
For The Uninspired.

BARO North America, Inc.
314.692.2270
www.baerousa.com
lee.rhoades@baerousa.com

Alpha H
BARO

VISION IMPORT GROUP
River Edge, New Jersey
Texas • Miami (2013)
201-968-1190
www.visionimportgroup.com
Facebook.com/VisionImportGroup

VISION PRODUCE COMPANY
Los Angeles 213-622-4435
Phoenix 602-256-7783
Nogales 520-223-8920
www.visionproduceco.com

VISION PRODUCE PARTNERS OF TEXAS
Pharr, Texas
956-843-8790
www.visionproducetx.com

The Vision Companies have established global grower partnerships to provide the highest quality products and service to our customers. These direct grower-relationships make our companies unique and allow us to deliver the highest quality produce at fair market price. Every one of our grower partners offers top quality fruit and is held to the highest food safety standards/certifications. Our customers receive up-to date information on product availability, market price points, trends, weather and other variables that influence our commodities.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

All consumers use limes; they cannot be overlooked. Limes cross over all cultures and cuisines. Make your displays prominent and be aggressive. Although limes in the U.S. have been displayed as a tropical/ethnic item in the past, they are now mainstream! Utilize the shipping boxes and show off the labels to increase consumer confidence in your quality.

POINT OF PURCHASE USAGE IDEAS

Limes should be displayed with recipes. Limes in particular have the unique ability to adapt to most anything a consumer is preparing. They are used as marinades; the zest is often used in desserts; a squeeze of lime serves as a condiment to boost flavor of meats, chicken or fish; fresh lime juice enhances beverages from Lime-aid to Mojitos. With a little direction, your customers can be using limes every day of the week! For printable recipes email us at info@visionimportgroup.com

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Seedless lime varieties include Persian, and Bearss. Seeded varieties include West Indian, Mexican, and Key. Persian Limes grown in Mexico have set the highest standard and are the most desirable.

Availability: Historically, there is lighter volume out of Mexico in January through March, creating higher pricing than the rest of the year. Through the Vision Companies positive grower relationships we are able to carry limes 52 weeks of the year from Mexico. When needed, we utilize our offshore relationships for additional sourcing.

The Vision Companies Sizing/Packs:
- 1-, 2-, and 5-lb. bag limes
- 40-lb. box ranging from 110 to 250 size (PLU sticker optional)
- 10-lb. place-packed and stickered (packed by hand, highest grade and color level)
- Ability to pack loose 10-lb.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

All holidays and special occasions are an opportunity to sell limes. Any occasion for home entertaining (Super bowl, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve, *Cinco de Mayo*) utilizes limes. Limes are crucial in the summer months for barbeques, family picnics and social gatherings. Every month there is an event or holiday where limes play a role. Check your calendar and don't miss any opportunities.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Clean and neat displays do wonders for lime sales. Undesirable fruit left on the stand becomes a negative focus, so ensure those few are removed so the beautiful product stands out. Limes should not be an item your customers need to pick through — quality fruit is available all year. Keep limes at 48 degrees; fresh limes can be held for up to four weeks after picking as long as they are picked and stored at optimal conditions. To maintain optimal quality for an extended period, be conscious of the storage temperature in your warehouse and back rooms in addition to retail displays. Optimum is 48 to 50 degrees. Remember: good limes sell more!

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Limes are extremely versatile. Place in the butcher section and/or seafood department with recipe recommendations. Place in a basket in beverage aisle with a reminder: "Don't forget the limes!" The possibilities continue in the produce department, incremental sales and positioning will bring limes to a top-grossing produce item.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

• Host a "Going Green" day at your store or restaurant as an opportunity to increase environmental awareness while selling product and having fun. The Vision Companies are very conscience of environmental impacts as our livelihood comes from the land.

• Retail stores can raise awareness by promoting environmentally friendly products. To keep with the theme, do a play on words and promote all of your green fruits and vegetables including limes.

• Restaurants can increase community connection and fun with a "green" fundraiser or awareness event — promoting locally sourced foods and serving Mojitos made with Mojito™ limes and fresh mint. Everyone will enjoy "Going Green."

For more information on how Food Service and Wholesale companies can start or increase their lime sales simply send an email to Info@visionimportgroup.com

DID YOU KNOW?

1. A little lime juice and water can prevent cut fruit or vegetables (like potatoes and apples) from getting discolored.

2. Limes contain unique flavonoid compounds that have antioxidant, antibiotic, and anti-cancer properties.

3. Allow a lime to come to room temperature before squeezing, it will release more juice.

4. Use limes as a healthy condiment on meats, fish and chicken — just a squeeze of lime can change or accentuate the flavor.

5. Fresh lime in drinks and cocktails can take a moment of relaxation to the next level.

The Vision Companies

Unified National Distribution

Vision Import Group
River Edge, New Jersey
Texas • Miami (2013)
www.visionimportgroup.com
facebook.com/VisionImportGroup
201.968.1190

Vision Produce Company
Los Angeles • 213.622.4435
Phoenix • 602.256.7783
Nogales • 520.223.8920
www.visionproduceco.com

Vision Produce Partners
Pharr, Texas
www.visionproducetx.com
956.843.8790

Importers, Distributors and Grower's Agents of Exceptional Fresh Produce

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!

Limes • Mangos • Pineapples • Lemons • Chile Peppers • Root Vegetables • Clementine's

Mojito Limes™ · Mr. Squeeze™ · Havana Limes · Mr. Squeeze™ · Havana Pineapple · Mango Maniac™

California Chile Company · Miss E.Z. Peel™ · Van Gogh Mango™ · Van Gogh Mango™ · Little Princess · Tropic Star

CIRULI BROTHERS

CIRULI BROTHERS, LLC
PO Box 1476
Tubac, AZ 85646
Tel: 520-281-9696
www.cirulibrothers.com • www.champagnemango.com
Email: info@cirulibrothers.com

MARKETING MANGOS IN TODAY'S ECONOMY

Short term price reductions and increased availability can have a positive impact on category sales, awareness for the fruit and increased consumption. Mangos are available year round and there are plenty of opportunities to promote them.

Retailers who promote early and maintain steady supplies and promotions during the season sell more mangos than those who wait until peak times to start promoting. Every year we see more and bigger displays between March and April, likely since there is less new fruit available in the market to compete with.

INCREASING CATEGORY SALES

Asian, Indian and Latino consumers are already familiar with and consuming mangos. To push sales, retailers need to develop markets with other demographics, including Caucasian buyers. There is increasing interest for fresh mangos, in part due to more widely available product information and year round availability.

Research shows that female shoppers tend to be the dominant buyers of grocery items for their households, and factors such as nutrition, freshness and overall well being play an important role in fresh produce purchasing decisions. Mangos are naturally fat free; they are a good source of fiber and an excellent source of Vitamins A and C. Retailers can capitalize on this information by playing up nutritional benefits in POS signage or with recipes near displays.

In-store cutting demos coupled with attractive pricing are one of the most effective ways to increase mango sales. We cannot stress just how important it is that retailers maintain ready-to-eat inventory and be willing to do more demos in stores. Avocados are a great example of a commodity that has seen increased sales due to consistent supplies and availability of ripe fruit. Where avocados used to be marketed green, you can now find them ripe, precut, and in pulp. Similarly, mango supplies should be consistent for the consumer, equally in terms of variety and quality of product.

REVAMP YOUR DISPLAYS

Want more foot traffic? Increase the prominence and visibility of mangos on display. Opt for large displays featuring multiple varieties. Arranging mangos by ripeness stage and variety also makes displays more attractive and easier for customers to decide whether they want ready-to-eat or greener mangos.

Retailers can also make it more convenient for customers to buy mangos by placing them strategically in smaller bins or baskets next to complimentary items or near the registers. Mangos don't have to be refrigerated and can be promoted in multiples.

QUICK TIPS

1. Promote early on and consistently during the season to boost sales.
2. In-store cutting demos increase visibility, create awareness and entice purchases.
3. Mix up displays by showcasing multiple varieties and packaging styles.
4. Maintain consistent quality and supplies for your customers to ensure repeat purchases.
5. Always display mangos at room temperature, away from ethylene sensitive products.

Offering consumers clamshell packs or small boxes also gives them more variety, product information and helps reduce the amount of handling in stores. We see the biggest value in packs that have information such as cutting guides and recipes than in mangos that are simply sold by the each. Retailers are selling more and more mangos this way.

VARIETIES & AVAILABILITY

Mangos are primarily supplied by Mexico in the spring and summer months but are available year-long with shipments from Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Guatemala and Haiti. The most popular varieties in the U.S. are:

VARIETY	AVAILABILITY*	SPECIAL QUALITIES
Ataulfo	Feb – Aug	Shape: Smaller, kidney-shaped Flavor: Exceptionally sweet and velvety due to minimal fibers. Key Traits: The finest Ataulfos are marketed under the Champagne® mango label. These mangos have a very small seed and their green skin changes to a bright yellow when fully ripe.
Haden	Feb – Jun	Shape: Medium to large rounded-oval shape. Flavor: Very rich and sweet with aromatic flesh that is moderately fibrous. Key Traits: Known for their sweet, fruity smell, Hadens have green and rosy skin that turns red with yellow overtones as it matures.
Tommy Atkins	Mar – Jul	Shape: Medium to large with a round, oblong shape. Flavor: Sweet yet firm with a more fibrous texture. Key Traits: Tommy mangos have vibrant green skin with red overtones. This is the most widely available, year-round variety in the U.S.
Kent	Jun – Sep	Shape: Very large and round Flavor: Remarkably sweet and juicy with a soft texture and few fibers. Key Traits: One of the most popular varieties due to its exceptional eating quality. Kent mangos have minimal fibers and smooth, green skin that shows a slight blush when ripe.
Keitt	Jul – Oct	Shape: Large, slightly elongated oval. Flavor: Rich and mildly citrusy with a smooth, slightly fibrous texture. Key Traits: Keitts have predominantly green skin that may show an occasional rosy blush when ripe. They flourish in Mexico as the season for other varieties fades away.

** From Mexico*

RIPENING RECOMMENDATIONS

Color is not the best indicator of ripeness because not all varieties change color. The best way to gauge ripeness is to squeeze a mango gently. If it is rock hard, the mango is immature. Alternatively, a mango that is soft and yields under pressure is ready to enjoy. Remember to press gently, however, or you risk bruising the fruit.

To speed up the ripening process, keep mangos at an ambient temperature and away from the cold room. Retailers can also inform their customers that they can speed up a mango's ripening process by placing them in a sealed paper or plastic bag. Mangos emit ethylene gas and when sealed, the ethylene will help the fruit mature faster.

DISPLAY CARE & BACK-ROOM HANDLING

In the back room, store mangos between 50-55°F but never at lower temperatures or you risk internal chilling injury. This causes the inside of the fruit to turn dark.

On display, keep mangos at room temperature and away from ethylene-sensitive products. Mangos do not need to be displayed on a cold rack nor do they require misting. Displays should also be checked frequently to remove overly ripe or damaged fruit.

The one and only.

There's only one Champagne® mango. Everything about it is unique: its incomparable taste, its smooth texture and rich golden color. From flower to harvest, the Champagne is the most pampered of all mangos. They flourish in the fertile volcanic soil of central Mexico and are caressed by mild south Pacific breezes gently drifting through meticulously cultivated mango groves. There are no finer mangos available at any price. And you can only get them at Ciruli Brothers.*

* Champagne® is a registered trademark of Ciruli Brothers.

CIRULI BROTHERS

Growers and Shippers Since 1940

Champagne® mango

WWW.CHAMPAGNEMANGO.COM WWW.CIRULIBROTHERS.COM

FRESH QUEST INC.
499 NW 70th Avenue Suite 107
Plantation, FL 33317
Phone: 954-316-5365 • Fax: 954-327-3739
Web: www.freshquest.net
Email: fq-info.net

The melon category represents a significant opportunity for retailers to build fresh fruit sales all winter long. Melons pair well with many other fruits and even deli and dairy items increasing the store's total ring. Retailers can build a strong melon program by pairing with a reliable quality supplier. Fresh Quest has been growing and importing melons to North America for over 20 years. Our farms are Primus GFS, Global G.A.P. and BASC certified. Visit our new website to learn more about what's new at Fresh Quest.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Due to their size and popular demand, Fresh Quest cantaloupes, honeydews, watermelons and variety melons typically command significant space for retail display. It's hard to miss the contrasting dark and light striped green watermelons next to the straw-colored cantaloupes contrasting with cream-colored honeydews in the produce department. If looking to further intensify the contrast in colors, add Yellow honeydew and Galia melons to the display to add vibrant splashes of color.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE / SIGNAGE

Several point-of-purchase options are available from Fresh Quest that will help stimulate movement. Custom high graphics retail display tray

boxes, posters, signage, display cards, and recipe booklets are all available upon request. Custom point-of-purchase floor displays to be used for secondary displays outside of the produce department are also available and help spur impulse sales. These customized point-of-purchase programs can support general marketing efforts and/or specific promotional opportunities.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

All of Fresh Quest's melons are grown in Zacapa and Asuncion Mita Guatemala. Our product is available from mid November through Mid May. Fresh Quest offers an exciting Spring Variety Melon program in March and April to excite your customers. Consider these options:

- Italian-Type cantaloupe has a striped/ribbed exterior. The internal eating quality is sweet and very aromatic.
- Galia melons are lightly netted melons resembling cantaloupe, but with green flesh like a honeydew. Fresh Quest's exclusive Galia melon variety, currently in production for distribution to Europe, has an irresistible pear and honey flavor profile.
- Yellow Honeydews are bright canary yellow with a sweet white flesh.
- Other specialty melon varieties are available for unique promotional opportunities.

PROMOTIONAL / ADVERTISING IDEAS

Melons are the cornerstone to any fruit salad. Suggest customers hollow a honeydew for the perfect edible bowl; just add other fruits, nuts, granola and yogurt in the fresh-cut display to complement whole melon sales.

Smaller melons not only present an opportunity to target aggressive price points, but they are perfectly sized for individual consumption.

Promote melon value. On a per-pound basis, melons are one of the best deals in the entire produce department. Especially in slower economic times, consumers appreciate value.

Focus on flavor. Few tropical fruits are available during the winter months that offer as sweet a value as the Fresh Quest melon program.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Cantaloupes should be stored at 38F to 42F. Honeydew, watermelon and variety melons are more susceptible to chill damage. They should be stored at 45F to 55F. If handled correctly through the supply chain, melons are relatively hardy and should hold up well on display at ambient temperatures, making melons the perfect candidate for large displays with minimal shrink expense.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Melons are ripe and ready to eat as soon as they are harvested. Melons should be firm and heavy for their size. Melons are ethylene producers, so take care when displaying other ethylene-sensitive products like bananas, avocados and stone fruit next to large melon displays.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- **Cross-merchandise cantaloupe, honeydew or Galia melons in the deli area to promote Prosciutto or near dairy to promote whipped cream, cottage cheese, or Greek yogurt!**
- **Serve ice cream in half of a small cantaloupe for dessert! The flavor combinations are endless.**
- **For Easter, use colorful melon varieties to create your own "Easter Egg Basket" display.**

QUICK TIPS

PROMOTE HEALTH ASPECTS:

1. Melons are a good source of dietary fiber, niacin, vitamin B6, folate and a very good source of vitamin A, vitamin C and potassium.

2. All melons are rated low on the glycemic index. Diets comprised of foods low on the glycemic index have been shown to improve both glucose and lipid levels in people with diabetes (type 1 and 2). They have benefits for weight control because they help control appetite and delay hunger.

TREATS ARE MEANT TO BE
SWEET

TAKE THE GUESS WORK OUT OF YOUR MELON PROGRAM

Fresh Quest, Inc is proud to announce the development of a new melon farm in Asuncion, Mita. This 1050 acre farm will increase Fresh Quest's melon production footprint in Guatamala by 50%.

By offering Fresh Quest cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon and specialty melons to your customers, you ensure a consistently great eating experience. Call Fresh Quest today or visit our new website to find out more about our program.

SHIPPING MID NOVEMBER THROUGH MID MAY FROM PORT MANATEE, FL, LOS ANGLES, CA AND PHILADELPHIA, PA.

954-316-5365 • WWW.FRESHQUEST.NET

JIM GRAVES • BRAD PALMER • ROBERT MILLIGAN

FRESH QUEST

PRIMUS GFS
GLOBAL G.A.P.
CT-PAT & BASC
CERTIFIED

MONTEREY MUSHROOMS

260 Westgate Drive
Watsonville, CA 95076
Phone: 831-763-5300 • Fax: 831-763-0700
Web: www.montereymushrooms.com

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Increase up to 40% by grouping all varieties together, providing proper space allocation and positioning mushrooms next to the salad section. Demographics are important in determining space allocation.

- Exceptional departments allocate 32 linear feet in the multi-deck case;
- Larger departments allocate 24-28 linear feet;
- Smaller departments with lower income shoppers allocate 16 linear feet;
- Small departments with higher income shoppers allocate 20-24 linear feet.

SECONDARY DISPLAYS

Exceptional versatility of fresh mushrooms makes secondary displays effective in bringing meal solutions to the consumer. On-going secondary displays in the salad and the meat cases will generate 12% growth in category sales. Seasonal displays can feature eggs, potatoes, rice, pasta, tortillas, cheese, onions and other cooking vegetables. Flexitarian, natural, and diet solutions are effective with mushrooms.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Attention through use of section signage, recipe cards, shelf talkers (on usage, selection, care & handling) will drive sales. Mushroom consumption grows when consumers become more educated on the flexibility, nutrition, and weight management benefits. Most stores carry 15-25 varieties/package types; so consumer education about various types of mushrooms is important.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

• Promote and merchandise Monterey's Grill-A-Bella® mushrooms in the high profile biodegradable tray. Provides 100% daily requirement of Vitamin D per serving for consumer health benefits.

• Sell bulk Portabellas by the each versus pound — sales increase up to 300%.

• Merchandise Monterey's Sliced Mushrooms with 100% Vitamin D in the new biodegradable package. The earth-friendly package highlights versatile usage ideas and recipes and nutritional benefits.

• Pictures of recipes on-pack, like Monterey's Bag products and new labels, or in the produce section, get the consumer thinking immediately, "What's for dinner?" Serving suggestions and healthy recipes are on every package.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Meal solutions can easily be achieved year-round by cross-promoting sliced mushrooms with bagged salads and capitalizing on grilling opportunities with steaks, stir-frys and shish kabobs on the grill. Steak-Mate thick sliced mushrooms are outstanding displayed in the meat section, as are Portabellas during grilling season. Mushrooms are an ideal item to utilize as a flavor enhancer and meat replacement or complementary ingredient in pastas, soups, eggs, rice, casseroles or pizza.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Maintaining a full variety of white, portabellas, specialty, and dried mushrooms will help drive sales! Practice maximum assortment, which includes a variety of whole and sliced Portabellas, Organics, Baby Pearls and value-added, Specialty mushrooms, dried and bulk. Look for new varieties, such as Monterey's Grill-A-Bella®, and sliced whites and browns that provide Vitamin D benefits for the consumer.

Mushrooms are available throughout the year, so it is important that they continue to be well displayed and promoted.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Mushrooms need promotional activity to help bring shoppers to the category. However, they are not price-sensitive, so deep discounts are not necessary. On average, promotions should be utilized 6-8 times per quarter to maximize overall sales. Discounts should generally be between 15-30%. Two-for-$X, or multiple pricing, tends to be the most effective method of promoting mushrooms. Multiple-item ads in the mushroom category generate the most volume and profit for the category. Feature advertising should be utilized once per quarter to highlight mushrooms.

QUICK TIPS

1. Keep mushrooms refrigerated and dry.

2. Promote mushrooms consistently year-round and particularly throughout the summer. Vary promotions to include all varieties. Deep discounts are not necessary. In-store promos help, too.

3. Utilize multi-item advertising highlighting all category segments.

4. Merchandise based on department sales and consumer demographics. Use sampling, educational info and recipes to emphasize versatility, nutrition, and weight management. Definitely add a second display of sliced mushroom packages in the salad section. Cross merchandise with complementary items.

5. Promote larger pack sizes and exotics. Use promotions to build consumer awareness of specialty varieties and trade them up.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATION

Mushrooms are highly susceptible to breakdown and should be refrigerated upon receipt. On average, mushrooms have a shelf life of 6 to 8 days; therefore it is critical that backroom inventory be kept to a minimum. Mushrooms gain more flavor as they age, so white mushrooms with a tinge of brown can still be sold as fresh. Brown and specialty varieties usually have an extra day or two in shelf life.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Mushrooms must be displayed and stored between 32 to 36 degrees. For every five-degree increase in temperature, mushrooms lose a day of shelf life. Due to their high perishability, mushrooms should never be stacked more than two high.

RECEIVING, STORAGE AND HANDLING TIPS

To manage shrink effectively, holding coolers should carry minimal overstock. Avoid out-of-stocks. Plan accordingly for promotions. Refrigerate mushrooms immediately. In addition, store mushrooms off moist floors, away from warm doorways, out of direct airflow and away from odorous perishable items.

SHOPPERS LOVE OUR NEW SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

MONTEREY®
MUSHROOMS

Innovation as Natural as our Mushrooms

800.333.MUSH • www.montereymushrooms.com Monterey Mushrooms, Inc Montereyshrooms

USA ONIONS
IDAHO-E. OREGON ONION COMMITTEE

PO Box 909
Parma, ID 83660
Phone: 208-722-5111 • Fax: 208-772-6582
Web: www.USAOnions.com

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

USA Onions, homegrown in Idaho-Eastern Oregon are versatile onions that may be used at any meal or in any favorite onion recipe. The appeal of USA Onions is their golden globe shape and their remarkably mild flavor. Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions retain their texture when cooked, adding flavor and consistency to any dish.

When it comes to displaying Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions, we say, "The bigger, the better." The bigger and more dramatic you can make your displays, the better your sales will be. "Buy All-American Winners, USA Onions... homegrown in Idaho and Eastern Oregon."

In addition, good signage that distinguishes the different varieties and versatility of onions *and* onions grown in the USA will go a long way in increasing sales.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Make quick-idea recipes available near the onion section to encourage impulse purchases.

To help consumers decide which onion to purchase, display an Idaho-E. Oregon Onion QR Code that, when scanned, launches consumers to the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Website (www.USAOnions.com) for sizing and onion variety information. For example, large-size onions reduce preparation time while their firm flesh makes them ideal for blooms, ringing, slicing and dicing.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

USA Onions, homegrown in Idaho-Eastern Oregon are available in yellow, red and white varieties. Harvest begins in August with onion availability lasting from August through March.

During the growing season, the Idaho and Eastern Oregon Onion region provides approximately 30 percent of the bulb onions consumed in the United States.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

In-store sampling and co-op advertising drive retail sales and product awareness. The aroma of onion rings sampled in the produce department is sure to draw a crowd. Contact the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee office to learn about the promotional opportunities for your store.

The Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Committee also holds an *Onion Lovers'* Retail Display Contest each January and offers cash prizes to winning displays.

Funds are also available to retail outlets that wish to increase the promotion of Idaho-E. Oregon onions through creative media advertising.

Plus, the Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Committee has an attractive label available that will be sure to draw customers to a display of consumer packs and 10-lb. bags. Many shippers carry the label, so ask for it on your next order!

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

USA Onions are known for their long shelf-life. You can increase profitability by reducing shrink if you follow these simple steps:

- Onions should be kept dry and unrefrigerated at retail. Good air circulation is critical for onions.
- Keep product rotated and remove separated and loose skins from the display bin.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

When onions are received, they should be placed one foot away from the wall for proper air circulation. Air circulation is crucial for long-term storage of onions.

Remember not to use plastic pallet wrap on onions in storage, as the plastic wrap limits air movement.

Onions should be kept cool and dry, ideally at 34° to 45° F with about 65 to 70 percent humidity.

Onions should not be stored with other produce that gives off moisture, such as potatoes.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

USA Onions has a special alliance with Weber-Stephen LLC and has focused on healthy grilling over the past year. The grilling theme has proven very effective in marketing and something worth trying. This promotion effort is great for cross-merchandising onions in the meat department. USA Onions are the perfect size for topping hamburgers, and king-size onion rings will just naturally have your customers thinking steak for dinner. For summer, try merchandising onions along with barbeque sauces to suggest a perfect outdoor grilling accompaniment.

Salad tie-ins have proven successful, too.

Display onions right next to other salad ingredients and see how they help sell more of your other produce items.

ALL-AMERICAN WINNERS

Idaho-E. Oregon Spanish Sweet Onions
Homegrown in Idaho and Eastern Oregon, U.S.A.

Scan this code for a complete Shippers' List
and order your supply today!

www.USAOnions.com
208-722-5111

BROOKS TROPICALS
18400 SW 256th Street, Homestead, FL 33090
Phone: 800-327-4833 • Fax: 305-246-5827
Web: www.brookstropicals.com
Email: www.brookstropicals.com/nutrition

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Display papayas as whole fruit as well as cut in half and shrink-wrapped. Use both methods simultaneously for increased sales.

Cutting a ripe papaya lengthwise shows customers that it might have some green on the outside, but inside the fruit is red, juicy and ready to eat. Demonstrate that the papaya can be eaten by the spoonful or cut up for salads, salsas or smoothies. Increase overall sales by selling it as an edible bowl filled with other fruits, yogurt or salads.

Whole papayas, when displayed with other tropical produce, make for a colorful, unique and interesting display, piquing the curiosity of new consumers. Generate excitement by displaying a large number of papayas — 15 or more pieces of Caribbean Red.

Keep an eye on your papaya display. Be quick to sort out any fruit that is less than cosmetically appealing. This fruit is still great tasting, so chop it up to add a tropical taste to prepared fruit salads or blend into fabulous smoothies or, as Hispanics call them, batidos.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Brooks Tropicals provides placards and tear-off pads for your produce department. The placards provide details on the papayas' origin, taste, color, availability, size and quality, as well as preparation and storage tips and nutritional information.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Brooks Tropicals is the exclusive grower of Caribbean Red papayas. Brooks grows, packs and ships these papayas year-round with food safety audited fields, harvesting crews and facilities in Belize, Central America.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Brooks Tropicals actively works to increase consumer awareness. We work with food editors, TV producers and celebrity chefs to promote the benefits of including papayas in healthful diets. Our Web site, which is included on our label, is a favorite go-to spot for answers on papayas.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Caribbean Red papayas are ripe starting at 50 percent color break. If the fruit gives when gently squeezed, it's ready to eat.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Caribbean Red papayas can be stored at 42° to 58° F to minimize ripening. Storing them at higher temperatures will speed the ripening process. Storing at 40° F or below for prolonged periods may cause injury to the fruit.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Papayas have soft skins, so they are delicate when ripe. Stack up to two or three deep. If using wicker baskets with uneven bottoms and sides, provide a layer of protection between the wicker and the fruit. Do not mist papayas. Keep them at room temperature. Caribbean Red papayas have a shelf-life of two to five days depending on ripeness; If possible, display papayas with the larger more colorful end up.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Don't fence these papayas in. Occasionally display them outside the tropical produce section by grouping with other popular recipe ingredients, such as salsas or fruit salads. Display a cut-in-half papaya with lime wedges and a plastic spoon in the meals-to-go section.

Caribbean Red and the Brooks Tropicals logo are registered trademarks of Brooks Tropicals, LLC.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- **We've known for some time that Caribbean Red Papayas are nutrient- dense and help digestion. Your customers may not know of recent studies that show this fruit's ability to reduce the risk of several types of cancer. Reproducible materials for in-store materials available, email maryo@brookstropicals.com**
- **For your breakfast or lunch-to-go crowd, cut a Caribbean Red Papaya in half, fill with berries or lime slices and add a spoon.**
- **The best way to display Caribbean Red Papayas is stacked on its side with its ends out. This makes it easy for your customer to select the desired color and size.**

QUICK TIPS

1. Amongst fruit, papaya is a nutritional powerhouse with a myriad of vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients. But papayas take nutrition two steps further than most fruits:

1. Papayas have a digestive enzyme called papain that aids in protein digestion and has a mild, soothing effect on the stomach

2. Caribbean Red papayas — as indicated by their vibrant red color — have carotenoids — such as lycopene — that act as antioxidants in the body. Antioxidants reduce inflammation and are considered cancer-fighting agents. Recent studies show that a high intake of lycopene-rich foods, such as Caribbean Red papayas, can reduce the risk of several types of cancers, most notably prostate cancer.
For more nutritional information email maryo@brookstropicals.com or go to our website at www.brookstropicals.com/getyourredon

When is a papaya ready to eat? Your customer may assume the fruit has to be all yellow. Not so, a Caribbean Red papaya is ready to eat between 50 and 100% yellow as long as the fruit gives with a little squeeze

There's an easy way to cut up a Caribbean Red Papaya; To find out how, go to www.brookstropicals.com/CRchop-BW.pdf

FROM OUR PAPAYA FIELDS TO YOUR STORES

CARIBBEAN RED®

Papayas

Great taste and proven shelf life delivered from our fields to your stores. One integrated process pushes papaya quality to its utmost with:

- Ongoing research and development
- Food safety-audited fields, harvesting crews, packing and shipping facilities
- State-of-the-art packing house
- Papaya ripening rooms
- Quality control team
- Continuous Cold Chain® from our fields to your stores

Primus Labs™
when food safety counts

Call Brooks today to get Caribbean Red papayas coming your way.

BROOKS TROPICALS®
GROWER • PACKER • SHIPPER

800.327.4833 • Fax: 305.246.5827
www.brookstropicals.com

© 2012, Brooks Tropicals LLC. The logo, Caribbean Red, and Continuous Cold Chain are registered trademarks of Brooks Tropicals, LLC.

UNITED STATES POTATO BOARD
7555 E. Hampden Ave., Ste 412
Denver, CO 80231
Phone: 303-873-2312 • Fax: 303-369-7718
Web: www.uspotatoes.com • www.potatogoodness.com
Email: ktriou@uspotatoes.com

The United States Potato Board (USPB) is the nation's potato marketing and research organization. Established in 1971, the USPB represents more than 2,500 potato growers across the country and has worked directly with food retailers for over a decade to build their potato categories. In addition to providing valuable resources such as ongoing access to Nielsen FreshFacts sales data, consumer/shopper research findings, videos, recipes and merchandising materials, the USPB also works hand-in-hand with retailers to drive their fresh potato category sales through a focus on identifying category trends, gaining a deeper understanding of the potato shopper and implementing proven USPB Best Practices.

In our years of working with hundreds of retailer programs, we have determined that the most successful potato category merchandising is centered around three key areas:

1. OPTIMIZING THE POTATO PLANOGRAM

The USPB and their retail agency, Nielsen Perishables Group, have proven time and again that the most effective arrangement for maximizing sales is consolidating all potato offerings together on one table. Potatoes should be organized by type and size (i.e. all Russets together and all Reds together as opposed to all bags together and bulk together). You should avoid merchandising potatoes in the wet rack or on refrigerated displays, and ensure that the section is oriented so that higher margin items are first in the shopper traffic flow to take advantage of greater impulse sales potential.

2. THINKING BEYOND THE PRODUCE DEPARTMENT

USPB research has found that potato shoppers are more prone to wander the aisles looking for ideas and meal inspirations while they are in the store. Although most potato purchases are planned, when potatoes are displayed outside of the produce section in relevant departments like meat, dairy and service deli they spark interest and encourage the incremental consumption that in turn leads to increased sales. Additionally, purchases of smaller packages of potatoes and specialty types are less planned, with impulse sales accounting for up to one-third of their volume, making them ideal candidates for out-of-department displays. In fact, a USPB pilot program featuring smaller bags of potatoes displayed in the fresh meat department achieved dollar sales of the featured items ranging up to 78 percent, and drove an increase of over 15 percent in total potato category dollar sales!

3. COMMUNICATION IS KEY

When researchers asked shoppers in a national survey to compare potato sections to other categories in the produce department, they rated potatoes low on being informative, motivating new purchases or providing new usage ideas. Yet other studies have found that consumers are very willing to serve potatoes more often if given new suggestions for preparing them. Taken together, these findings underscore the opportunity that retailers have by revamping the potato table to become an in-store destination for information and ideas that drive increased usage, consumption and sales!

The key is giving shoppers more information about the differing qualities of potato types and inundating them with suggestions for serving them. Simply put, more ideas = more potato sales! This can be accomplished in-store through more consistent use of suggestive signage and more widespread distribution of recipes, either virtually through QR codes or physically through take-one recipe cards.

The USPB recently proved the effectiveness of giving shoppers more ideas for using fresh potatoes with a pilot program conducted at a leading Midwestern retail chain. Nielsen Perishables Group identified a matched panel of test-and-control stores, and we developed a recipe card holder with a simple call to action, along with 16 different recipe cards that focused on potatoes for breakfast. Then we merchandised our recipes near three high-traffic breakfast staples: eggs, bacon and breakfast sausage.

We engaged a third-party merchandising service to visit the test stores twice each week to ensure that the card holders were kept filled with recipe cards. To keep our recipe selections fresh, we released 4 new recipe cards to shoppers every two weeks throughout the duration of the 8-week test. When the results were tallied, the sales that our little program achieved were pretty sizable!

- Total potato category dollar sales were 5.6 percent greater in the locations with recipe cards vs. the matched panel of control stores over the 8-week program, averaging $133 per store/per week in added sales.
- To our surprise, the test stores continued to out-perform the control stores, even after the program period concluded; in fact, they actually widened the sales gap over control stores, with dollar sales running 6.9 percent higher!
- Sales of bacon, eggs and breakfast sausage also benefitted from the recipe cards merchandised in the test stores. Although we didn't see an increase during the test period, sales of these three product categories in the test stores climbed during the post-test period (just as the potato category had responded) to outperform control stores by 5.7 percent, or an average of $346 per store/per week in added sales.

The USPB is committed to increasing fresh potato sales volume at retail by continuing to serve up new tools and information that make merchandising activities more effective. By taking full advantage of USPB Retail Programs and our many marketing resources, retailers and their suppliers can ensure potatoes continue to maintain their leadership position in the produce department while delivering robust sales and profits!

Things to Do

1) Get a copy of this 14" x 20" Potato Potential poster* by going to www.potatoretailer.com

2) Promote potatoes more frequently in 2013 + $$$

3) Contact the USPB for even more marketing and merchandising ideas!

*While supplies last.

Scan this code to get your poster!

MARIE'S®
40 Pointe Drive
Brea, CA 92821
Phone: 972-569-6813
Contact: Matt Middleton
Web: www.maries.com
Email: mmiddleton@venturafoods.com

Marie's refrigerated produce dressing offers additional opportunity to add incremental profit to the produce department. Based on average retail prices across the country, a typical retailer profit is approximately $1.50 per unit. Combine this high dollar margin with ease of handling and minimal shrink and you have a product that will help you improve your overall produce department margins.

Effective promotion is less about straight discounting and more about merchandising the product directly adjacent to or in partnership with fresh produce. Help the consumer recognize the easy ways to transform your produce into an extraordinary meal!

WHY MERCHANDISE PRODUCE WITH DRESSING?

The best promotions enable consumers to easily create a great-tasting meal or side dish. That means getting consumers to pick up a jar or bottle of Marie's with every produce purchase. Refrigerated produce dressing presents a host of cross-merchandising opportunities. Their location right in the produce department gives produce personnel easy access to utilizing them in a variety of cross-promotions.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

- Use point-of-sale to create a strong linkage that not only delivers consumer benefit, but also assists in driving increased sales and profits.
- Attaching a coupon or recipe will assist the consumer in figuring out how to transform a commodity into a meal, but also helps create a link between fresh produce and the fresh, homemade dressings.
- Cross-merchandise fresh produce with produce dressing to increase the sales of both:
  - Coleslaw Dressing with cabbage
  - Chunky Blue Cheese with celery
  - Creamy Ranch with baby carrots
  - Blue Cheese Vinaigrette with asparagus

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Yogurt dressing is driving refrigerated produce dressing category growth. Marie's Yogurt Dressing is naturally low in fat and calories, helping you reach health-conscious consumers. They are premium-positioned items that trade consumers up, driving additional profits to your bottom line. Make sure to merchandise Yogurt Dressing with produce as you would any dressing.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

POS materials and signage are an effective way to get consumers to link the use of dressings and fresh produce with serving suggestions and recipes. Marie's has a variety of point-of-sale items designed to complement our refrigerated produce dressing. Our proprietary recipes feature both traditional and innovative uses for a wide range of produce items.

VARIETY AND INNOVATION

The refrigerated produce dressing category delivers delicious homemade flavor, fresh taste and product variety. With our category-leading Chunky Blue Cheese Dressing, popular vinaigrettes and innovative Yogurt Dressing, Marie's is committed to the growth of refrigerated produce dressing. Looking forward, Marie's will continue to deliver new products that enable consumers to turn produce into extraordinary meals.

TASTE AND NUTRITION

Refrigerated produce dressing presents a healthier, more wholesome dressing alternative for consumers — attributes which can be promoted and are particularly applicable to the produce department.

The Marie's line of refrigerated saald dressing is made the old fashioned way, which means:

- No Artificial Preservatives
- No High Fructose Corn Syrup
- No Modified Food Starch
- No Artificial Flavors

Ensure your entire category is made this way and then take advantage in promoting this fact to your fresh-minded produce consumers.

QUICK TIPS

1. Merchandise next to refrigerated fresh vegetables for an increased produce ring.

2. Cross-merchandise with slower moving products for double the benefit.

3. Use POS throughout the department to remind customers to check out the dressings.

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

Suggesting particular usage ideas to consumers will help increase sales:

- Marie's makes any ordinary produce item into an extraordinary meal.
- Marie's Chunky Blue Cheese works great as a dip.
- Marie's Creamy Yogurt Dressing can be substituted for regular dressing for a healthier lifestyle.

Stock Your Shelves with Proven Winners.

Marie's, the #1 brand in refrigerated salad dressing, serves up a winning combination of incremental sales, profits and category growth.

Marie's®
Makes the ordinary... *EXTRAORDINARY!™*

maries.com

*#1 line of refrigerated Pourables and Spoonables and fastest growing line of Yogurt Dressings. Information Resources Inc. Infoscan® Data, Refrigerated Salad Dressing (52 weeks ending 2/3/13).

© 2013 Ventura Foods

NATURIPE FARMS
P.O. Box 4280
Salinas, CA 93912
Phone: 831-722-3505
Email: vlopes@naturipefarms.com
www.naturipefarms.com

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Create 'Peak of the Harvest' or 'Peak of the Season' displays. Feature growers in your ads, in store POP and QR code promotions.

Create More Berry Behavior. Customers continue to buy more berries and represent almost 20% of total fruit sales! The chart demonstrates this key trend. Take advantage of this demand by creating a "berry category destination" with strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries.

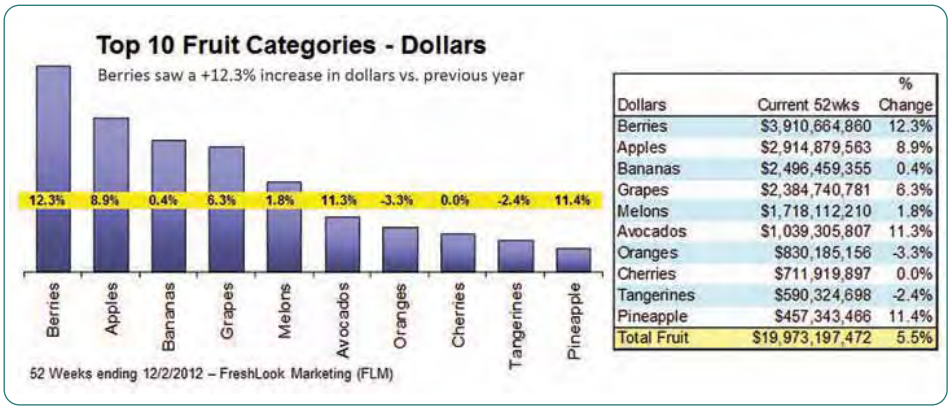
BUILD SECONDARY DISPLAYS AROUND THEMES

Take Back breakfast. A growing trend amongst nutritionists and restaurants is to "Take Back Breakfast". Take advantage of this and cross-promote strawberries with breakfast items such as Cereals or the Dairy Case (Yogurt & Milk). Reinforce how healthy, great tasting strawberries can be as part of a nutritious breakfast!

Don't forget organic! Organic strawberry sales continue to grow faster than conventional – as a result Naturipe's acreage has more than doubled.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

1. Use health messages and QR codes to help consumers find more information and recipes
2. Usage tips and eye catching recipes are what consumers are asking for
3. Feature growers and their family farms



Dollars	Current 52wks	% Change
Berries	$3,910,664,860	12.3%
Apples	$2,914,879,563	8.9%
Bananas	$2,496,459,355	0.4%
Grapes	$2,384,740,781	6.3%
Melons	$1,718,112,210	1.8%
Avocados	$1,039,305,807	11.3%
Oranges	$830,185,156	-3.3%
Cherries	$711,919,897	0.0%
Tangerines	$590,324,698	-2.4%
Pineapple	$457,343,466	11.4%
Total Fruit	$19,973,197,472	5.5%

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Strawberries are available year-round out of California, Florida and Mexico. To create additional excitement and drive sales, feature Naturipe Selections – such as our "1975" premier Southern California Regional Variety. Consumers understand seasonal and limited times of some varieties. Highlight these great opportunities with terms that draw consumers and stimulate impulse sales: *New*, *Proprietary*, *Limited Acreage*, *Peak of Harvest*

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Strawberries on promotion or ad are the best way to pull berries through the register. Feature 2-pound or 3-pound clamshells during peak harvest weeks. Coordinate demand plans with your shipper to provide ample time to secure ad volumes. The key to large pack ads/promotions is to allow the growers and shipper advance notice of your interest in the large pack. Without advance orders it is difficult for field operations and harvest crews to plan accordingly.

Plan a Summertime Sensations promotion – build strawberry sales in August and September around 1- and 2-pound packs for Labor Day, Back to School and Healthy Breakfast starts for the kids.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

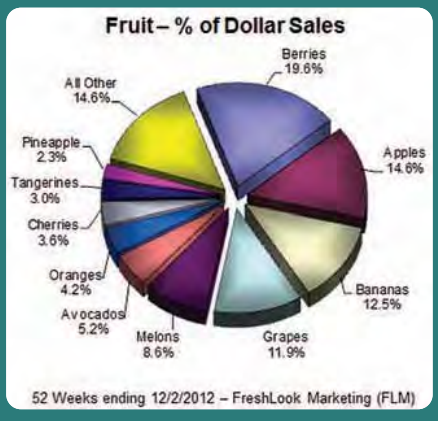
It's best to always store and display strawberries with as little break in the cold chain as possible. Berries should always be kept at 32°.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

- Dark and white chocolate is always fun for creative dipping
- Strawberry Shortcake (Angel food cake and Reddi-wip) is always popular and easy to create displays in-store with fresh strawberries
- Think outside of sweets and pair with avocados and chips for a salsa or brie cheese and crackers; pair with bananas and other berries for a Power Smoothie

CATEGORY DEVELOPMENT

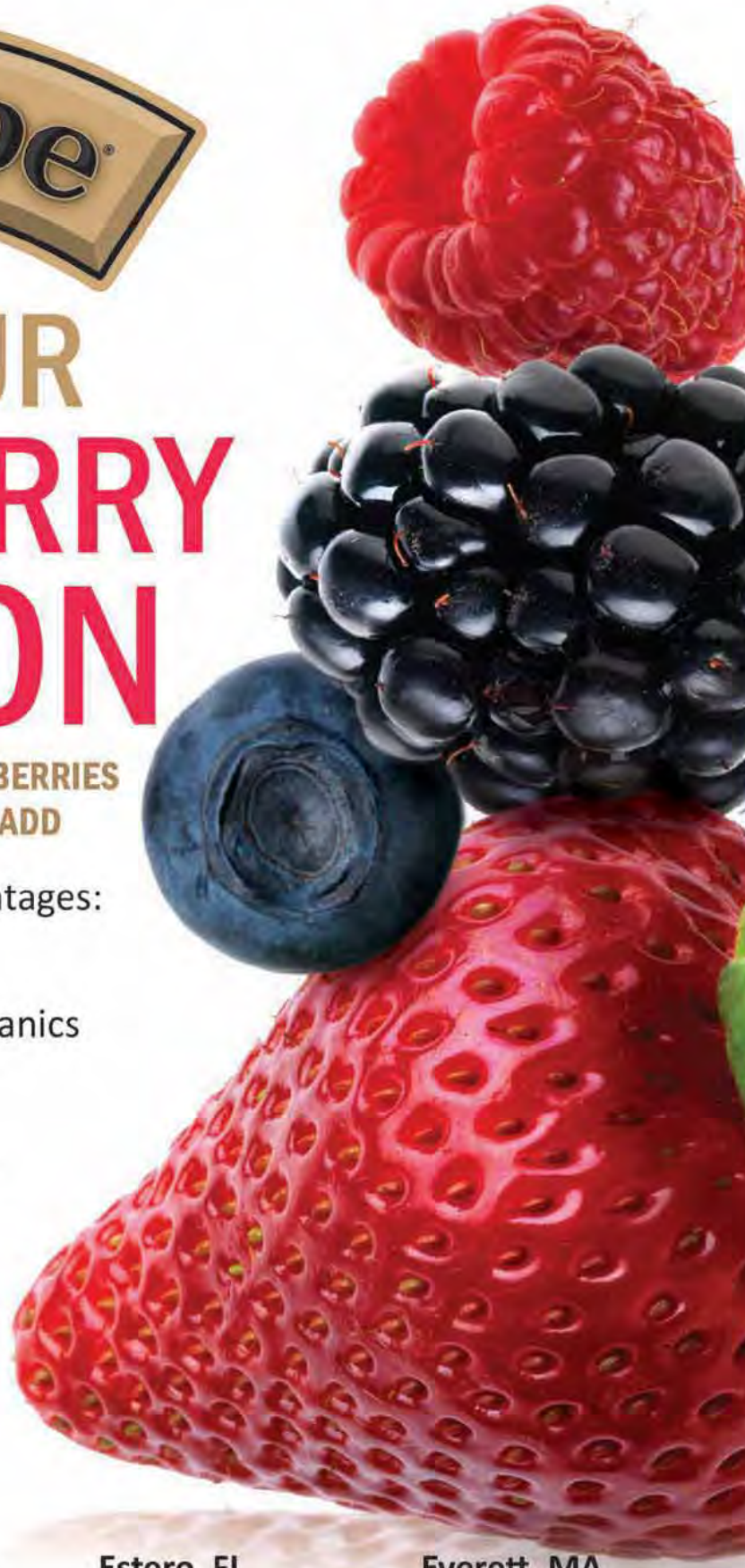
• Review Berry Category Development data and execute growth programs that are based on sound data, consumer trends information and crop timing.



naturipe

WE ARE YOUR TOTAL BERRY SOLUTION

STRAWBERRIES • BLUEBERRIES • RASPBERRIES
BLACKBERRIES • READY TO EAT • VALUE ADD



Naturipe® delivers very unique advantages:

- Deal directly with the growers
- Proprietary varieties - including organics
- Year-round availability
- Safe, traceable fruit
- One point-of-contact, streamlined procurement process

Pick Naturipe® to be your
Total Berry Solutions partner!

Contact us at
naturipefarms.com
sales@naturipefarms.com

Salinas, CA	Grand Junction, MI	Estero, FL	Everett, MA
(831) 722.3505	(269) 434.6791	(239) 591.1664	(239) 551.4455

Join our *Berry* conversation

You Tube

KEYSTONE FRUIT MARKETING
11 N. Carlisle St., Suite 102
Greencastle, PA 17225
Phone: 717-597-2112 • Fax: 717-597-4096
Web: www.keystonefruit.com

Keystone
Life should be this sweet.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- **Schedule a chef demo to show consumers new ways to use healthy onions to infuse flavor into recipes.**
- **Develop a "Recipe Kit" promotion which cross-merchandises all the ingredients, including sweet onions, to make an easy meal.**

Sweet onions present an opportunity for incremental produce sales if merchandised. The health and flavor benefits are an easy sell for consumers looking to cook tasteful food without salt and cholesterol. Sweet Onions also offer ample opportunity for promotion and cross-merchandising with a variety of products in and out of the department.

Onions are the most consumed produce item in the world. Average annual onion per capita consumption in the United States is 21 pounds — a tremendous opportunity for consistent sales.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

GO BIG!!! Capitalize on one of today's hottest trends — fresh produce. It's healthful, colorful and bursting with freshness. Nothing says, "Buy Me" quite like big, prominent bulk and consumer bag displays. End caps, stand-alones, value-added product offerings, multi-size strategies and consumer bagged displays offer consumers multiple buying options and ensure incremental sales lift!

Establish secondary display areas, especially during promotional periods, to increase sales and consumer awareness. Effective point-of-purchase materials and signage also help to showcase the nutritional benefits and outstanding flavor of high-quality sweet onions to consumers.

FLAVOR AND NUTRITION DIFFERENTIATION

Product differentiation gives consumers reasons to buy with confidence. Emphasizing the quality, flavor, and nutrition differences of Certified Sweet® onions over regular cooking onions will promote higher rings at the cash register. The top two reasons people eat fruits and vegetables are taste and nutrition. Product education and tasting demos allow consumers to experience products and always generate sales lifts.

Keystone
Life should be this sweet.

AVAILABILITY: YEAR ROUND OPPORTUNITY

Being able to ensure a consistent sweet onion flavor profile is an important element for repeat and consistent sales. Retailers can now ensure their consumers an enjoyable eating experience every time! Certified Sweet® onions are available 365 days a year.

Consistently purchasing the highest quality sweet onions brands from only reputable industry leaders is the easiest way for retailers to provide consumers with confidence that they are buying the highest quality, safest, freshest and most flavorful sweet onions all year long. Forming a win-win relationship between vendors and retailers provides long-term, sustainable and uninterrupted supply. Use regional freshness as an educational vehicle to educate consumers on uniqueness of recognized sweet onion growing districts.

As consumers increase interest in buying local and knowing the grower, stores can capitalize on the fantastic regional information available for the various sweet onion regions. Creating brand awareness translates to consumer loyalty and repeat sales.

Certified Sweet® onions include:

- Sugar Sweets® available spring and summer
- Walla Walla River® available summer and fall
- Mayan Sweets® available fall, winter and early spring

PROMOTION

Thirty percent of consumers say they would buy and eat more fruits and vegetables if they knew how to use them, so go ahead and help them… Stores can take advantage of various websites such as Keystone's Kitchen Website, the Vidalia® Onion Association's site, and the Walla Walla® Sweet Onion Committee site to provide additional information and resources for customers and to seek out new and creative promotional ideas.

Demo's add excitement as well as an educational component. A good demo can not only spur sales that day but build consistent sales on a regular basis.

Emphasize Certified Sweet® onion's nutritional benefits and variety of uses. Promote as ingredient for holiday or party entertaining, including Superbowl, Cinco de Mayo, and summer barbecues.

QUICK TIPS

1. Sell "A Healthy Way to Add Flavor!" Onions are highly recommended for those trying to prevent cardiovascular disease, cancer and infections. Also, sweet onions are fat- and cholesterol-free, and contain very little sodium.

2. Ensure your sweet onions are SWEET! Get them from a reliable, certified source.

3. Educate Store Personnel: Ensure store-level personnel are aware of how to store and handle the product, the difference in sweet onions versus other varieties, and usage ideas. They are the front line in helping to promote the product and provide information to customers.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Sweet onion usage is very diverse, and cross-merchandising opportunities are virtually limitless. Their sweet mild flavors make them fantastic on a hamburger or in a fresh salad — simply slice and enjoy. As an ingredient they are guaranteed to enhance your favorite recipes; sweet onions will take any menu offering to a whole new level! Sweet onions are an excellent ingredient added to any dish. Especially in guacamole, as part of salads, on hamburgers, in Kabobs, or with steaks.

Masters of Merchandising

Village farms®
Greenhouse Grown

VILLAGE FARMS
7 Christopher Way
Eatontown NJ 07724
Phone: 732-676-3030 • Fax: 732-676-3032
Web: www.villagefarms.com
FOLLOW US ON:

POINT OF PURCHASE SIGNAGE

Focus on the Taste Profile of Tomatoes!

With so many different sizes, shapes, colors, and varieties of tomatoes available to consumers, it can be overwhelming. POS should focus not only on variety name, growing method, and country of origin, but should include a flavor descriptor to help with purchasing decisions. Adding signage to include 'sweet', 'savory', 'juicy' or other taste adjectives will help the consumer zero in on their choice more quickly.

FOCUS ON HEALTH BENEFIT OF TOMATOES!

We know tomatoes are high in lyopene, and vitamins A and K, but what exactly does that mean? Signage should be 'outcome' focused: for example, Heart Healthy, Cholesterol Reducing, Improves Vision, and Reduces Hypertension. Tomatoes are an overall health elixir.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Tomatoes, the Healthy Snack: For a healthy snack option, position a display of grab-n-go pouch bags like Heavenly Villagio Marzano near check-out or in the snack isle.

MERCHANDISING & DISPLAY

Always display tomatoes at room temperature. This will ensure best FLAVOR.

Quick Meal Solutions enhanced with grab-n-go recipe cards add interest and appeal to tomato displays.

Create an inviting display of tomatoes with mozzarella, basil, and olive oil for a healthy salad option.

Pair tomatoes with sweet bell peppers for a colorful eye-catching display; add garlic and boxed pasta for quick-ready meal solution.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Partner up on Village Farms' Facebook and Twitter for communicating to targeted audiences on specials and regional programs.

SNACKING TOMATO VARIETIES RULE WITH CONSUMERS

Encourage Healthy Eating!

A recent study by the Hartman Group shows snacking accounts for more than half of adult eating occasions. And close to one third of adults who eat alone do so to 'savor a high quality food experience'. Make sure you are carrying a full variety of snacking tomatoes including Village Farms Heavenly Villagio Marzano® — packed in convenient grab and go bags it is the perfect snacking variety. Sinfully Sweet Campari®, Lip-Smackn' Grapes®, and Mini Sensation Cherries® are all part of Village Farms Garden Fresh Flavor™ Collection. Tomatoes do not need to be refrigerated so opportunities for creating eye catching displays within the produce section and other areas of the store abound!

Texas Grown

North American Greenhouse Hothouse Vegetable Growers
CERTIFIED GREENHOUSE .COM

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Not all tomatoes are created equal!

Hydroponic Greenhouse grown varieties have the benefit of being available 365 days a year. Hydroponic greenhouse grown varieties are vine ripened in a controlled climate achieving a more flavorful and consistent quality tomato. Hydroponic greenhouse grown varieties do not use soil and are grown in an enclosed environment mitigating the risk of contaminants achieving a higher level of food safety. Learn more at www.certfiedgreenhousefarmers.com'

QUICK TIP

Locally Grown is hot. Use POS to promote product grown locally. Village Farms new packaging for Texas features Texas Grown on every product.

Village farms®
Greenhouse Grown

heavenly villagio marzano®

The sweet taste of heaven on earth.

www.villagefarms.com

877.777.7718

sales@villagefarms.com

follow us:

for more information

TURBANA
550 Biltmore Way, Suite 730
Coral Gables, FL 33134
Phone: 305-445-1442 • Fax: 305-443-8908
Web: www.turbana.com
Email: info@turbana.com

Turbana Tropicals appeal to two very different target audiences – mainstream and ethnic – and we suggest retailers use a variety of means to reach out to them both to boost business and improve loyalty.

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER

Success in any retail business is all about knowing your customer. In our case that includes the rapidly growing Hispanic consumer, as well as other ethnic groups. Also giving focus to the customer's experience is a measure of growing importance. Turbana Tropicals are a value added product line, offering ethnic customers a centralized option for the fresh vegetables they demand while giving mainstream customers a new option to incorporate fusion ingredients to their meals. Multiple tropicals, One stop.

BUILD ON SUCCESS

Promote the tropical category. By grouping several of our Turbana Tropicals together, retailers are adding variety to their displays, while shoppers are seeing the versatility of the retailer's offering. We assist retailers with managing the category, granting them the opportunity to tailor the assortment of varieties specifically to the store's demographic.

VARIETIES

- Aloe Vera
- Batata
- Calabaza
- Chayote
- Dry Coconut
- Eddoes
- Malanga Blanca
- Malanga Coco
- Malanga Lila
- Yellow Yam
- Yuca

PRICE BY UNIT

Weekly market pricing will dictate price points at the retail level. Like plantains, tropicals should be sold by the "each" vs. by the pound.

TAILOR POINT-OF-PURCHASE AND SIGNAGE

Retailers have to craft an overarching platform that works for both audiences and tailor messaging to each. For the mainstream audience, education is key. Showcase ripeness instructions, storage tips, have inspirational food samplings available in the produce area and hand out recipes. For the ethnic group, labeling the tropicals and using signage in their native language as well as in English is key. Also adding staff representative of each of your customers' demographic that are knowledgeable about the tropicals establishes credibility and makes these customers comfortable to shop in your stores.

TARGET PROMOTION AND ADVERTISING

Due to continuous growth of minority population, the U.S. bears a resemblance to a "salad bowl" rather than a "melting pot" with distinctive subcultures within the nation. In a salad bowl, all the ingredients come together, but each item remains unique and different. There is a quick toss, but no blending! Each ingredient retains its original form and flavor. Retailers should embrace this idea when thinking of promotional ideas. For example, promoting yellow yams during Thanksgiving and Christmas is a must, as the majority of Cubans and Puerto Ricans enjoy them puréed with garlic and lime during the holiday season.

Aloe Vera

Batata

Calabaza

Chayote

Yuca

QUICK TIPS

1. We encourage retailers to use bilingual signage and employ staff representative of this new multi demographic background so that shoppers can feel comfortable

2. If asked how the uses are similar to traditional items, retailers should describe most of the roots as potato-like, with the opportunity to mash, boil, puree, etc.

3. Think outside the (store) box. Invest strategically in younger customers, who are not only early adopters of social media and mobile device use, but are now translating their super-user status into trendsetters

CHANGE DISPLAYS TO KEEP IT FRESH

New displays and new products are just as appealing to potential shoppers as fresh bread in the bakery, so adding Turbana Tropicals is a must! Additionally, the fact that these items are available 52 weeks per year, we believe alternating them monthly or seasonally is a key tool to keep displays appealing. Adding padding and not stacking items throughout displays is the final push to dazzle consumers with a functional, yet practical display.

CROSS-MERCHANDISE WITH CREATIVITY

Tropicals lend themselves to some creative cross-merchandising ideas because they can be incorporated into an array of menu options. Understanding this, cross-merchandising displays should cater to a variety of palate options. Some like savory and spicy, while others like sweet and tart together. For example, why not showcase chayote and squash next to one another? They make for an amazing side dish. Maybe Yuca with bread and crackers to show how easy stuffed Yuca balls can be made?

Multiple Tropicals. One Stop.

Turbana Offers One Stop Shopping & Category Management For A Variety Of Tropicals

Building on the success of our plantain program, we are now offering an expanding line of tropicals to provide you with a turnkey solution and access to new consumer markets.

Contacts us to find out more and let us help you grow your bussiness.

www.turbana.com | 800-turbana

TURBANA Tropicals

Providing healthy tropical foods that transform people's lives.

MANN PACKING COMPANY

PO Box 690
Salinas, CA 93902
Phone: 831-422-7405 • Fax: 831-422-5171
Web: www.veggiesmadeeasy.com
Email: elena.hernandez@mannpacking.com

Complete your fresh-cut vegetable category by stocking Mann's fresh vegetable meal kits. Mann Packing Company, the company that innovated the fresh-cut vegetable category and created broccoli florets, broccoli coleslaw, and introduced Broccolini® is bringing another new-to-the world product to the produce department, with the first ever Veggie Mac-n-Cheese kid-friendly fresh vegetable meal kits.

They are available in four varieties: Broccoli with classic cheddar; broccoli, cauliflower and carrots with white cheddar; broccoli with bacon cheddar; and broccoli and cauliflower with fiesta cheddar. Capture more vegetable meal kit sales today by stocking and merchandising these items along with Mann's core-vegetable SKUs.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Carry all four facings of Mann's Veggie Mac-n-Cheese and watch sales soar! Merchandise the fresh vegetable meal kits next to other value-added produce items to encourage impulse purchases. In larger stores, dual placement by value-added protein items is successful.

Build a grab-and-go refrigerated display case near the store entrance or checkout stands for impulse sales.

Mann's Veggie Mac-n-Cheese fresh vegetable meal kits are designed to appeal to kids, so eye-level placement is effective. Keep displays well stocked with product rotated by best-if-used-by date, first in, first out. Stand-up bags are easy to merchandise.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

SKU-specific channel strips and shelf-talkers are available to draw attention to the new items.

Point-of-sale support material can help draw the shopper's eye and spur trial. Shelf-talkers include a QR code to lead shoppers to an interactive video with more information about Veggie Mac-n-Cheese.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Mann's fresh vegetable meal kits are ideal for "build-a-meal" types of advertising vehicles. Partner with your store's rotisserie chicken or other ready-to-eat protein products and add a loaf of bread: Dinner is served! Another idea is to incorporate them into any weekly meal planner tools you offer consumers.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Merchandise fresh vegetable meal kits in the value added produce case next to packaged salads and refrigerated dips/dressings. Proper temperature control is paramount to the success of these items. Keep constantly refrigerated between 34° and 38° F.

QUICK TIPS

1. Monitor inventories closely to avoid out-of-stocks.
2. Keep displays consistent so consumers know where to find fresh vegetable meal kits.
3. Use point-of-purchase signage to draw attention to the category and new items in the category.
4. Promote, promote, promote! Leverage Mann's customer support and integrated marketing program to bring new users to the category.

We Look Good in Green.

Your sales will look good too!

Incorporate Mann's Sunny Shores® Green Beans into your fresh-cut vegetable set!

Why Green Beans from Mann?

- Quality
- Superior Sourcing Model
- Best In Class Category Management
- Year-Round Promotions
- Vendor Efficiencies
- Shelf Uniformity
- Popular Sizes

Because green is good!

© 2011 All Rights Reserved Mann Packing Co., Inc.

Salinas, CA 93901 | www.veggiesmadeeasy.com | 800.884.6266

We can help meet your vendor diversity goals.

Certified WBENC Women's Business Enterprise

SUNNY SHORES MANN'S FAMILY OWNED FOR THREE GENERATIONS

Masters of MERCHANDISING

Thank You!

TRUCCO
Importers | Distributors | Wholesalers

Alberts
ORGANICS

Apio
GreenLine

BARO
PERFECT RETAIL LIGHTING

NATURAL DELIGHTS
FRESH MEDJOOL DATES

Booth Ranches
CALIFORNIA

BROOKS
TROPICALS

CALIFORNIA
SUN-DRY

Cal-King

Calavo

Catania
WORLDWIDE

CIRULI
BROTHERS

CMI
COLUMBIA MARKETING
INTERNATIONAL

Del Monte
Quality

DNE
World Fruit Sales

Dole

DOMEX
superfresh
growers

Driscoll's

Duda
farm fresh foods

Family Tree Farms
GROWER • PACKER • SHIPPER

FISHER CAPESPAN

FRESH
QUEST
INC

Zeal
Fruit for a Healthy Future

FULL STEAM
MARKETING & DESIGN

GEORGIA GROWN

HerbThyme
FARMS

Hollandia
PRODUCE

USA
Idaho
ONIONS

GROWN IN
IDAHO

Fisher

Keystone

KINGSBURG
ORCHARDS

Mariani

Marie's

Marzetti

AUERPAK
BRAND

MONTEREY
MUSHROOMS

naturipe

PACIFIC GOLD

Pacific
Tomato
Growers

Peruvian Asparagus
PAA
Importers Association

PROCACCI
BROTHERS SINCE 1946
The leader in the field.

RIVER
RANCH

ROSEMONT
FARMS

SUN
WORLD

SUNLIGHT
sunlight international sales

SUN PACIFIC

SUNSWEET

TANIMURA
& ANTLE

TC Marketing, Inc.

UNITED STATES
Potato
BOARD

THE UNITED
Sweet Potato Council

Ventura Foods, LLC

VIDALIA
ONIONS

Village
farms
Greenhouse Grown

Vision Import Group

TWELVE YEARS OF "MASTERS" SPONSORSHIPS

MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING CATEGORIES

Apples
Artichokes
Asian Pears, Pluots & White Flesh Fruit
Asparagus
Avocado
Avocado - Lightskin
Bananas
Bell Peppers
Berries - Conventional
Berries - organic
Beverages
Cantaloupe
Carrots
Celery
Cherries
Chestnuts
Chili Pepper
Citrus
Collard Greens, Kale, Mustard & Turnip Greens
Corn
Cucumbers
Dates
Dips
Dried Fruit
Dried Fruit & Nuts
Dried Plums
Eggplant
Figs
Fresh Cut Meal Solutions
Fresh Cut Vegetables
Fresh-cut fruit
Garlic
Grapes
Green Beans
Green Onions
Greenhouse Tomatoes
Greenhouse Vegetables
Guacamole
Herbs
Hydroponcially Grown Living Lettuce
Hydroponic Butter Lettuce
Hydroponic Lettuce
Kiwi
Kosher Fruit
Leafy Greens
Leaves
Lettuce
Lighting
Limes
Mangos
Melons
Mushrooms
Nuts
Onions
Organic Fruit
Organic Vegetables
Papaya
Party Vegetable Trays
Pears
Peppers
Pineapples
Plantain
Potatoes
Pre-Conditioned Fruit
Radishes
Retail Merchandising
Salad Dressing
Salsa Chips
Specialty Bananas
Spinach
Steam Veggies
Strawberries
Sun Dried Tomatoes
Sweet Onions
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes
Tree Fruit
Tree Fruit - Pre-conditioned
Tropicals
Veggie Kits
Veggie Snacks
Whole Leaf Lettuce

REPRINTS AVAILABLE

Call us at 561-994-1118
or e-mail masters@producebusiness.com
for pricing and information.

GET READY for National Nutrition Month!

Link to our **award-winning** website FruitsAndVeggies—More Matters.org.

fruits & veggies more matters®
FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org

Visit PBHFoundation.org for **free** retailer and supplier marketing toolkits.

Shop at PBHCatalog.org for **inexpensive** fruit and veggie promotional materials.

Promote FoodChamps.org, a **kid-friendly** interactive site for young children.

Donate fruit & veggie **educational** materials to your local school through Team Classroom.

TEAM CLASSROOM

For more information, contact Produce for Better Health Foundation at 302-235-2329.

©2013 Produce for Better Health Foundation, 1488-0113

10 Ways To Turn Your Avocado Sales Green

Commodity boards, cross-merchandising and customer choice are just a few things to consider when merchandising avocados. **BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD**

PHOTO COURTESY OF CALIFORNIA AVOCADO BOARD

Capitalize on avocados' star power and boost retail volume and dollar sales by targeting two key factors: supply and demand.

Americans have an insatiable appetite for avocados. Guacamole is now synonymous with the Super Bowl and other chip-dipping holiday celebrations. Restaurants are cashing in on this hot trend as well. Carl Jr., Subway and Panera Bread, for example, have all added either guacamole or avocado slices to popular menu items with lip-smacking sales success. Retailers, too, are seeing green when they look at the avocado category.

Jon Holder, senior manager of produce and floral at Raley's Family of Fine Stores, a 133-store chain headquartered in West Sacramento, CA, says, "Avocados are one of our Top Five SKUs annually in the produce department."

Capitalize on avocados' star power and boost retail volume and dollar sales by targeting two key factors: supply and demand.

1. Stock Ample Supplies

Avocado volume sales in the United States grew a whopping 53 percent in 2012 over the year prior, and more significantly, avocado dollars grew 15 percent in 2012, marking the second consecutive year of double-digit dollar growth, according to data supplied by the Irvine, CA-based Hass Avocado Board (HAB).

Looking forward, HAB's executive director Emiliano Escobedo, says, "The Hass avocado market is expected to expand even more in 2013. HAB projects annual volume for 2013 to reach 1.65 billion pounds, an increase of 10 percent, compared to 2012."

Holder finds it beneficial that this volume is spread throughout the year from different growing areas. "We are able to procure avocados year-round with supplies from California, Chile and Mexico, and this allows us to provide good quality fruit to our customers without experiencing any gaps."

Mexico is the chief supplier of avocados to the U.S. market. This southern neighbor is projected to export nearly 1 billion pounds of avocados into the U.S. market between July 2012 and June 2013, with supplies heaviest from October through March. Eduardo Serena, marketing director for the Uruapan, Michoacán, Mexico-based Avocado Producers and Exporting Packers Association of Michoacán (APEAM), remarks, "We look forward to strong sales in 2013 as avocado consumption continues to grow. The volume shipped into the United States leading up to Super Bowl was at a record high. However, exports are projected to decrease but remain at strong, promotable levels as we head into spring."

The California crop will start harvest mid-March and run well into October. Jan DeLyser, vice president of marketing for the Irvine-based California Avocado Commission (CAC), reports, "We expect around 515 million pounds this year. There will be a lot of opportunity for growers and handlers to market to consumers."

Chile sends its fruit to the U.S. market from August through February. At presstime, Maggie Bezart, marketing director for the Washington, D.C.-based Chilean Avocado Importers Association (CAIA), noted it was too early to offer any supply projections at this time.

Peru began shipping avocados to the United

"We carry one primary size of avocado in bulk, a 48-count from California and Mexico and 50-count from Chile. In addition, we offer a 4-pack with 60-count-size fruit."

— Jon Holder, Raley's Family of Fine Stores

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CAA

States two years ago. In 2012, Peru exported an estimated 60 million pounds of fruit from mid-May to September of 2012, thus overlapping with California. Rankin McDaniel, president of the McDaniel Fruit Co., headquartered in Fallbrook, CA, notes, "Peru is projected to ship 40 to 60 million pounds of avocados into the United States this year. While it's too early to tell if this supply helps the overall market, Peru is here to stay. Something new always takes time to develop."

One selling point of Peruvian fruit is its size. Bill Tarleton, director of marketing and communications for Oxnard, CA-based Mission Produce Inc., reports, "It typically sizes in the 36 and even 32 ranges. There's a preference in the market for large fruit and it will move anytime."

New Zealand and the Dominican Republic also ship avocados to the United States, adds McDaniel. "We're also receiving inquiries from Central America and other South American countries, but nothing is on the horizon."

In spite of this bountiful supply, "There are still all kinds of demand that needs to be fulfilled," points out Tarleton.

2. Offer Hass And More

For Raley's Holder, "Hass is our go-to variety for avocados."

Similarly, at Martin's Super Markets, a 21-store chain based in South Bend, IN, director of produce and floral, Ed Osowski, says, "We primarily carry Hass avocados."

The Hass variety accounted for 92.5 percent of avocado category dollar sales during the 52 weeks ending November 24, 2012, according to the Nielsen Perishables Group, a Chicago, IL-based fresh food consulting firm. What's more, Hass avocados represent approximately 97 percent of California avocados sold commercially and 100 percent of imports from Mexico, Chile and Peru.

Giovanni Cavaletto, vice president of operations at Index Fresh, Inc., headquartered in Bloomington, CA, confides, "We use to handle 8 to 10 million pounds of varieties such as Bacon, Zutano and Fuerte. Then the price for these went down. We've been carrying Hass only for six to seven years. The benefits of the Hass variety include a longer window of six to eight months to harvest; an easily recognizable black color when ripe that doesn't show scarring, the ability to travel well, and above all, tastes good."

Lamb Hass is a variety out of California that harvests from the end of July through September and occasionally into October. It has developed a loyal customer following, according to the CAC's DeLyser. "There's definitely a place for it due to eating quality and large size," she asserts. "Production averages 10 to 12 million pounds annually."

While Hass is the heavyweight in market share, the green-skin avocado is well established and gaining ground. This variety accounted for 4.2 percent of avocado category dollar sales during the 52 weeks ending November 24, 2012, according to the Nielsen Perishables Group.

Bill Brindle, vice president of sales and marketing for Brooks Tropicals, in Homestead, FL, remarks, "We've had two great years, and it looks like 2012 will be yet another. Record high temps in January may push good to great."

Green-skinned avocados are available out of Florida from June through January. Brindle adds, "Most retailers carry both green-skinned avocados like our SlimCados and Hass. There's no reason not to in an avocado market that doesn't seem to know any bounds."

Green-skinned avocados are nearly double the size of Hass, with the most popular in the 20- to 24-count range.

3. Give Customers A Choice

Shoppers have a choice of two sizes of avocados at Raley's. "We carry one primary size of avocado in bulk, a 48-count from California and Mexico and 50-count from Chile," details Holder. "In addition, we offer a 4-pack with 60-count-size fruit."

Many retailers utilize a two-size program in order to offer customers two price points. A two-size program that offers bulk and bag, or two sizes of bulk and a third bagged, "can satisfy the needs of a larger number of shoppers," points out DeLyser.

CAIA's Bezart agrees, adding, "It used to be that retailers would only carry a two-size program, one bulk and the other bag. However, we are seeing more and more offering a two-size program in bulk with different price points; for example, 50-count and 70-count fruit. In this example, there is enough differentiation that the front-end has little problem identifying

All Year. All Ways. Always Good.

Perfected where avocados first came from, Avocados from Mexico not only make good food better, they make sales better!

- Our unique trees bloom naturally four times a year for a steady supply of rich, creamy avocados.
- We drive General Market and Hispanic consumer demand with powerful print, digital, radio, TV and promotions.
- We support retailers with customized programs, training, expert insights and more.

To grow stronger sales, choose the category leader.

Contact your Avocados from Mexico representative today.

Avocados From Mexico

www.AvocadosFromMexico.com/trade

©2013 Avocados from Mexico.

Competition And Cooperation

Few other fruits have the budgetary bounty and marketing manpower of the Hass avocado behind them. There's the California Avocado Commission (CAC), Avocado Producers and Exporting Packers Association of Michoacán (APEAM), the Mexican Hass Avocado Importers Association (MHAIA), the Chilean Avocado Importers Association (CAIA) and the Peruvian Avocado Commission (PAC). A mandatory assessment of 2.5-cents per pound times a projected 1.65 billion pounds equals a promotional budget of over $40 million. Then there's the Hass Avocado Board (HAB) that works with all organizations that represent different countries of origin. HAB's role is to invest resources in areas that benefit the Hass avocado category in the U.S.

Do these multiple resources breed competition or cooperation?

Competition provides for a variety of opinions, says Rankin McDaniel, president of the McDaniel Fruit Co., in Fallbrook, CA. "Each organization works hard to develop its own programs, and naturally, there is some duplication and overlap. However, collectively, they raise awareness for the avocado in the U.S. marketplace and that's what we want to grow demand and consumption."

Doug Meyer, vice president of sales and marketing for West Pak Avocado, Inc., in Temecula, CA, agrees. "Natural competition is good for the market," he stresses. "We work together with all countries supplying the U.S. market before and during their respective seasons to gain an understanding of their own key windows of supply and eating quality. This allows us to advise our customers on optimal promotion periods and minimizes confusion in the marketplace."

"The promotional assistance from these organizations is very helpful, especially the POS that offer different ideas on how to use the product," says Ed Osowski, director of produce and floral at Martin's Super Markets, a 21-store chain based in South Bend, IN.

Ed Figueroa, avocado category manager for LGS Specialty Sales, in the Bronx, NY, recognizes, "The commissions and associations have done an outstanding job of marketing avocados to the U.S. population. If we had the volume we have now 10 years ago, it would have been a disaster. Yet, demand has kept up with the unbelievable supply, and prices remain good." **pb**

the size and inputting the proper code. We are seeing growth in bag product, too, generally at a 60-count to 70-count size at retail."

Bins are a good merchandising vehicle to successfully present a two-size bulk program. Mission's Tarleton advises, "Build your primary display of one size on an end-cap and a second size in a bin display a few feet away. This helps customers see more easily that two different sizes are offered."

Most of the country-of-origin marketing organizations offer bin displays for retail promotions. Bezart reveals, "Secondary display bins continue to be the No. 2 promotional item requested by our retail customers."

4. Consider Organic

Organically grown avocados represented 3.9 percent of category sales during the 52 weeks ending November 24, 2012, according to the Chicago, IL-based Nielsen Perishables Group. While this number is a small slice of the overall pie, stocking organic avocados can provide incremental sales. Doug Meyer, vice president of sales and marketing for West Pak Avocado, Inc., based in Temecula, CA, says, "Organic avocados can add sales without cannibalizing sales of conventionally grown fruit."

5. Make Sure To Offer Ripe Fruit

Avocados are considered a niche category at Martin's Super Markets, but one that is growing exponentially. According to Osowski, "We're now getting a 15 to 18 percent increase in sales annually. Why? We've implemented a preconditioning program. Customers want to buy fruit to eat on the same day. They don't want to buy something they can't eat for a while. We use signage to let customers know we sell ripe avocados."

Raley's Holder agrees, noting, "Having fruit on-hand at the stores that is ripe and or just breaking is the key to stable avocado sales. We pre-condition our own fruit at our distribution center. This gives us control over our inventory, and since we know when we are going to do a big push, we are primed and ready for additional movement."

Research reveals that ripe programs increase sales by 2-to-1 and in some cases as high as 4-to-1. Studies also show that different consumers like to buy avocados at different stages of ripeness. This is especially true of heavy and super heavy users, which represent over one-half of all avocado consumers and account for 90 percent of avocado sales volume, according to HAB's Fall 2012 Tracking Study. "These users purchase 120-plus avocados per year and multiples at a time for a variety of usages," reports CAIA's Bezart. "They are educated about the different stages of ripeness, so it is important to have at least two stages available — one for now and one for a few days later."

To cater to this customer, ripening programs are not only more prevalent, but also more sophisticated. Ed Figueroa, avocado category manager at LGS Specialty Sales, in the Bronx, NY, shares, "We just had a retail customer ask for different stages of ripeness within the same order on a repeated basis."

Retailers will profit most by using multiple display stations to promote avocados at various levels of ripeness, advises APEAM's Serena. "However," he advises, "do not combine ripe with unripe avocados in the same display. To help consumers find what they want, identify ripe avocados with stickers or signage and display firm avocados on a separate display. This will also prevent customers from squeezing the fruit, which causes internal bruising and shortens the shelf-life."

Green-skinned avocados do not require preconditioning.

6. Bag More Profits

Bagged avocados are becoming more popular, and Serena says it's because "they provide consumers with convenience and added-value when purchasing multiples."

Bezart agrees, adding, "Bags are scanable and are a great grab-and-go offering to consumers."

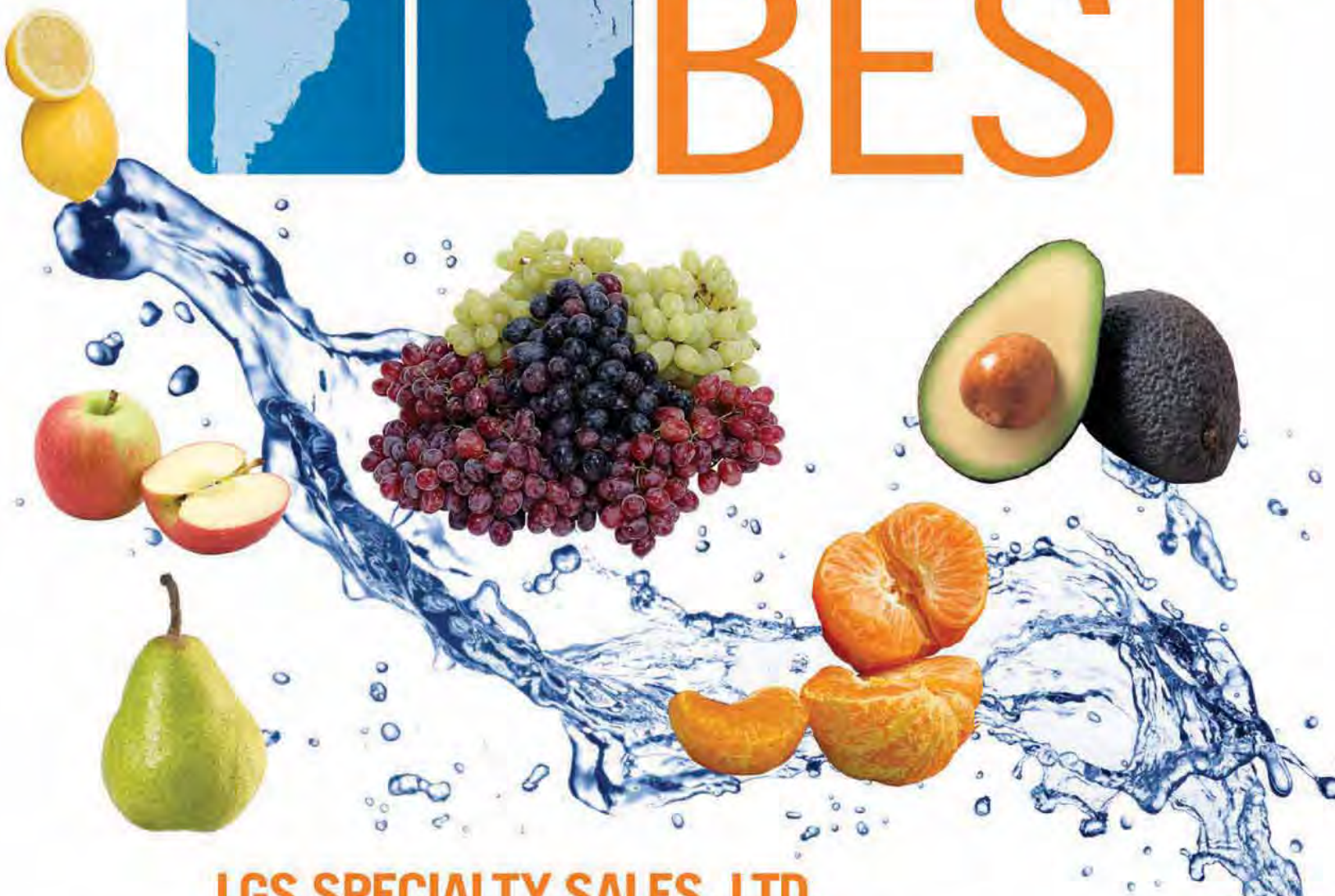
Bagged avocados represented 11.5 percent of category dollar sales during the 52 weeks ending November 24, 2012, according to the Nielsen Perishables Group.

"Bags are up 13 percent for us," says Mission's Tarleton. "Our bags are mesh with a header card and finger holes. They also have a back strap that makes a nice platform for recipes and nutrition information."

APEAM's Serena recommends, "Retailers should price packaged avocados as a value when compared to bulk avocados."

"Green-skinned avocados are now begin-

LGS...
BRINGING YOU THE WORLD'S BEST



LGS SPECIALTY SALES, LTD.

718.542.2200 • 800.796.2349 • Fax: 718.542.2354

www.lgssales.com

LGS We Produce

DARLING CLEMENTINES Nature's Sweet Temptations

SUAVO AVOCADO

DARLING CITRUS

"Don't load up and create giant pyramid displays. This can increase shrink. Instead, build a smaller display and replenish often, if needed."

— Bill Tarleton, Mission Produce Inc.

ning to sell in 4-count bags," says Mary Ostlund, director of marketing for Brooks Tropicals.

Index Fresh offers a variety of packaging options to its retail customers. "This includes value-added bags with four to 12 fruit, depending on whether the customer is a conventional or club store," details Cavaletto. "We also do large boxes for club stores and smaller gift boxes for holidays and clamshells."

Clamshells haven't proven as popular as bags, says Tarleton, who acknowledges, "Customers want to be able to feel the fruit."

However, LGS's Figueroa counters, "Some retailers are finding success by packaging avocados and all the ingredients to make guacamole in one clamshell pack."

7. Give'em Room

Avocados sold at Raley's are displayed primarily on a prominent dry table end-cap. Holder details, "Typically, the display is 18 square feet and close to or with the tomato category. We will also cross-merchandise avocados with onions, garlic, lemons and limes."

Tarleton cautions, "Don't load up and create giant pyramid displays. This can increase shrink. Instead, build a smaller display and replenish often, if needed."

An effective way to gain greater display space for avocados is to place them in secondary locations. Martin's Osowski shares, "We'll place a couple of cases center-store, such as in the chip aisle."

Similarly, at Raley's, "We display in a two-case merchandiser in front of the value-added salad category," says Holder. "On promotional weeks, we display in the front lobbies and at the check-out stands."

Cross-merchandise avocados near the deli or bread aisle, suggests APEAM's Serena. "This can help to promote their use in sandwiches," he says.

8. Go Beyond Guacamole

Avocados are a staple multi-use fruit that goes far beyond guacamole. Osowski says, "We suggest our customers try avocados in salads, sandwiches and breakfast omelettes, as well as many other ways through the use of POS materials."

Recipes are a great way to inspire consumers to use avocados in new and different ways as well as how to incorporate them into family favorites. APEAM's Serena adds, "Think pizza,

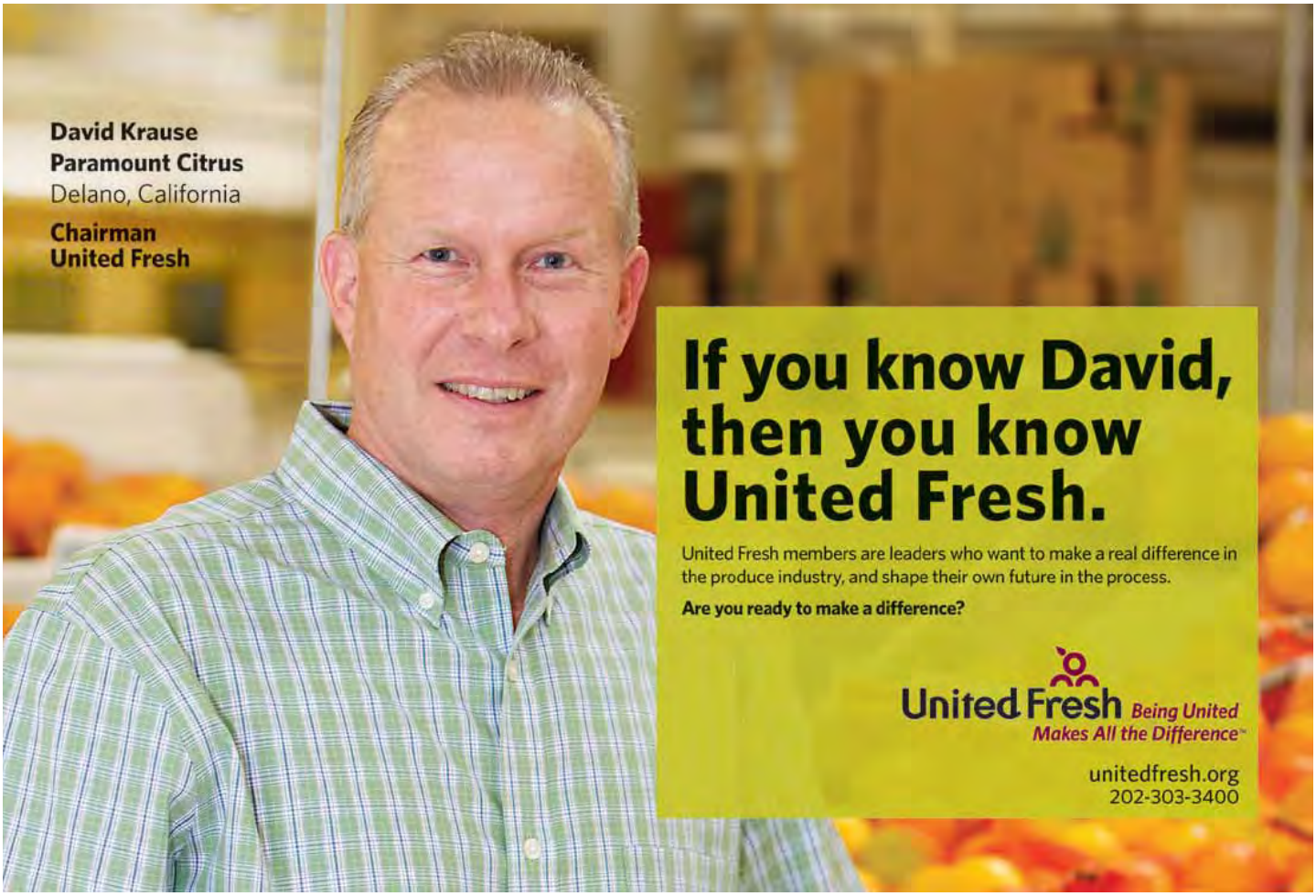


PHOTO COURTESY OF BROOKS TROPICALS

salads and soups. Those types of cross-merchandising partners allow us to generate visibility in other areas of the store in addition to produce. This could be via an on-pack coupon that requires the purchase of both products to save, or by simply making a serving suggestion with signage that inspires and has appetite appeal."

In an effort to support new usage ideas, Avocados from Mexico will launch a general market promotion in April that encourages consumers to enjoy avocados with breakfast. Planned efforts include a consumer sweepstakes on Facebook, a promotional tie-in with the American Egg Board including a joint coupon offer, online and mobile advertising and national blogger outreach.

Despite this versatility, there are some consumers who aren't familiar with avocados, which is where demos prove effective. West Pak Avocado's Meyer says, "We believe in the power of in-store demos and find they can provide up to a 40 percent lift during demo days and a sustained lift in avocado sales afterwards. We recommend finding creative but easy recipes for the demos. Be sure to move beyond guacamole, since that is what the consumers want."

Last year, the company partnered with a national retailer in a manned-demo promotion that offered shoppers slices of avocado for taste-sampling. The idea was to highlight the naturally rich flavor of the fruit. Demo personnel also handed out recipe cards.

One creative cross-merchandising demo/promotion was conducted by the CAIA last year, in conjunction with Veramonte wines and HEB. "Wine and avocados were sampled together in the wine section of the store," explains Bezart. A secondary bin display with a special header card that matched the demo tabletop and wine necktag was displayed in the produce department. Recipe brochures were available in both departments. All materials included QR codes that took consumers to a specialized landing page to enter to win one of four $500 HEB Grocery cards."

9. Sell The "Good-For-You" Factor

Nutrition could be the next potent way to notch up strong demand for avocados. In 2010, HAB established its nutrition research program with the goal of defining the scientific basis for health and nutrition communications, its member organizations and growers and importers into the United States. Seven clinical studies are currently underway to investigate the relationship between fresh avocado consumption and risk factors for cardiovascular disease, avocado's potential positive role in weight management and diabetes, and the fruit's ability to enhance nutrient absorption. The most recent research revealed that when 11 healthy men added fresh slices of Hass avocado to a burger, some of the negative after-meal effects observed such as inflammation and narrowing of the blood vessels were reduced within hours.

Rob Wedin, vice president of fresh sales and marketing for Santa Paula, CA-based Calavo Growers, Inc., reports, "Research is clear that avocados are a healthful food. Additionally though, avocados are healthy food that people love because they are so much fun to eat. Avocados are the best of both worlds."

One way retailers can leverage the nutritional appeal of avocados "is to use key bullet points of information in messages about avocados," says West Pak's Meyer. "This can be through the use of POS, in-store and online newsletters, especially when coordinated with the chain's registered dietitians, and even on packaging for bagged avocados."

Green-skinned avocados contain less fat per serving than the Hass variety. Brooks' Ostlund recommends, "Post highlights — like Slim-Cados have 1/2 the fat and a 1/3 fewer calories' — on signage with a QR code linked to our mobile website for more information."

10. Take Advantage Of Holidays To Promote

Holidays always provide a spike in avocado sales. Raley's Holder recognizes, "Our department managers are very creative in going after those extra sales at these times. We utilize the POS display bins that are provided by the commissions. They always have great, eye-catching graphics and provide secondary display space."

Holidays and sports-centric merchandising are the best promotional tools for retailers today, adds CAIA's Bezart. "Tailgating and homegating continue to grow each year. Nothing beats the promotions around football games, but other commissions are working hard to build programs around baseball and outdoor holidays like Fourth of July."

In 2012, for the first time, the Fourth of July ranked as the largest selling avocado holiday, moving 85.4 million pounds. Cinco de Mayo was second with 81.9 million pounds and Super Bowl ranked third at 71.9 million pounds, according to HAB data. This same scenario is projected to hold true for 2013. Avocado sales are projected at 96.4 million pounds for the Fourth of July, 87.3 million pounds for Cinco de Mayo and 79.0 million pounds for Super Bowl.

Avocados from Mexico will capitalize on the summer grilling theme with an integrated promotion with celebrity chef, Rick Bayless, who will show consumers how to make BBQ better with avocados. The June and July promotion will include in-store POS materials, social media outreach to Bayless' extensive fan base and live appearances by Bayless and public relations outreach.

"Supply and demand are forecast to be so good for 2013, it will be possible even in non-traditional times for retailers to stay on promotion throughout the year," says Mission's Tarleton. **pb**

Berries Bag Profits For Produce Departments

With year-round availability of many of the berry favorites, retailers have to work harder than ever to keep them front-and-center in consumers' minds. **BY K.O. MORGAN**

Berry sales depend on much more than just having a familiar location in the produce department.

Berries are a big ticket item for produce departments and are the No. 1 seller for many retail stores, according to Chicago, IL-based Nielson Perishables Group, which reports that berries account for 3 percent of produce purchases, which in 2011 amounted to $3 billion in retail sales.

Berries seem to sell themselves as an ever-popular choice for consumers. But maximizing berry sales still involves taking advantage of the year-round availability of many berries and making sure they are pushed front-and-center in the department. "Most consumers expect to find berries in the produce department year-round now," states Matt Curry, president of Curry & Co., based in Brooks, OR. "There are certainly peak times, and popular local and regional times, but berries are mainstream items now with year-round consumer demand. Produce managers should want to be the berry category leader in their market area," he adds.

"Berries hold an important place in the consumers' mind all year," agrees Cindy Jewel, director of marketing for Watsonville, CA-based California Giant Berry Farms. "It's important that they maintain a consistent spot or place in the produce department that is familiar to regular customers in order to maintain sales."

Chris Christian, vice president of marketing for the Watsonville-based California Strawberry Commission (CSC), advises produce managers to have an impactful destination display set in place year-round so that consumers can easily find it. "Consistency can help to increase sales and drive volume and profits for the retailer," she points out.

Still, berry sales depend on much more than just having a familiar location in the produce department. "Building large displays of berries may help increase sales short-term, but it can be harmful long-term if there isn't careful attention paid to the rotation," warns Gary Wishnatzki, president and CEO of Wish Farms, headquartered in Plant City, FL. "For example, strawberries need to be kept refrigerated to maintain freshness and consumer satisfaction. It may be better to sell a few less and have happier, repeat customers."

Frances Dillard, director of marketing for Driscoll's, in Watsonville, CA, agrees. "Understanding the care and handling of such a perishable product is critical," she says. "Practicing good cold chain management will ultimately maximize retailers' profits because restocking berry displays throughout the day keeps the product looking visually appealing to shoppers."

"Large lobby and front-of-department displays can increase strawberry sales by as much as 12 percent and total produce sales by five percent," reveals Christian. "On the other hand, sales can decrease by nine percent when displays are moved to the middle or back of the department!"

According to Richard Stiles, director of produce and floral for Redner's Markets, a 42-unit chain based in Reading, PA, "The best way to merchandise berries is to have all the berries all together. Make a big berry display, and then put it out front-and-center," he says.

Curry of Curry & Co. disagrees. "Blueberries definitely have larger volume periods so you need to be prepared to take advantage of those large spikes in production," he counters. "This can often mean larger overall displays for blueberries. But at the same time, protect each category of berries, and make sure other

"On-pack coupons on berry purchases that offer discounts on complementary items are another successful method of cross-merchandising without having to move the products from their usual locations."

— Doug Ranno, Colorful Harvest

berries don't get lost in the excitement over the blues. In other words, make sure a consumer can see that you clearly have blueberries, blackberries, raspberries and other berries available."

CSC's Christian also believes that produce departments should create larger displays of blueberries within the berry category. "Too often, a small display of blueberries can be overpowered by strawberries," she acknowledges. "Balance the category and maximize sales of blueberries, blackberries and raspberries with impactful displays," she advises.

"If a constant display is maintained, space within the display can easily be changed to increase the position of one berry type over another, based on availability at different times of the year," adds Jewel of California Giant Berry Farms.

Adding Creativity To The Mix

Although berries are already in demand by consumers, creative marketing can lead to even more of an increase in berry sales and boost sales of other products in the produce department and throughout the store. "It's great to have a unique display, but berries can piggyback on other products," says Tim Wetherbee, sales manager at Diamond Blueberry, Inc., located in Hammonton, NJ. "Produce managers should take advantage of whatever opportunities there are to sell berries."

"Cross-merchandising provides one more way to encourage a purchase and help consumers with ideas on how to prepare berries in a variety of ways," notes Jewel. "When retailers offer items like shortcakes, crepes, pie shells and dipping chocolate, consumers learn serving suggestions that increase sales of produce, and also increase sales of other items within the store, thus generating that higher ring at the register."

"On-pack coupons on berry purchases that offer discounts on complementary items are another successful method of cross-merchandising without having to move the products from their usual locations," offers Doug Ranno, chief operating office and managing member of Salinas, CA-based Colorful Harvest.

"Berries are used in many different ways now and in so many other dishes," adds Sue Harrell, director of marketing for the Plant City-based Florida Strawberry Growers Association, (FSGA). "It's not just with the cakes and whipped cream. They are being used in salads and cereals as well."

Curry of Curry & Co. agrees, adding, "Berries are so versatile! Within the department, they can be cross-merchandised with fruit salads and are a great addition to fresh green salads — a nice surprise for people who don't consider them a fresh salad item. And they also work great with meats, poultry and fish."

"Adding berries into salad displays will

help to capture impulse sales," says the CSC's Christian. "A major national retailer has done a good job already of creating salad sets that include berries — an idea the consumer may not have thought of before."

"The key to cross-merchandising berries is emphasizing that berries are a versatile ingredient and a fruit," adds Dillard of Driscoll's.

"You can also generate more impulse buys by creating attractive end-cap displays of berries, particularly near registers," suggests Ranno. "Alternating color bands of strawberries, blueberries, red raspberries, and blackberries also helps attract consumers' attention."

"Create a secondary display and give consumers multiple opportunities to see them in your department," advises Curry. "And keep the displays fresh and full with shelf appeal! Berries are highly perishable, and consumers will walk away from displays of tired looking berries."

Another opportunity to creatively display berries is using a "berry patch" display. "The Driscoll's-branded Berry Patch strategy, which includes strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries, is the best way to increase volume, sales and consumer satisfaction," claims Dillard.

"We always encourage berry patch displays within the produce department to capture incremental sales," says Jewel of California Giant Berry Farms. "A variety of berry types displayed in multiple pack sizes will attract more customers and more sales."

"Most retailers have found success by promoting all berry segments in a 'berry patch' ad format," agrees Christian. "And having all berry types on sale and available in the destination set makes it easier for the consumer to shop the category as a whole."

Offering berries in different sized packaging can also give consumers a wider choice that encourages sales. "Berries are an item that customers buy year-round," states Keith Fetterolf, director of produce for Musser's Market, formerly Foodland, a 3-unit chain based in Quarryville, PA. "If there's a downside to that, it's that packing tends to go smaller during 'off season' if you will, like blueberries packed in pints, rather than in 4-oz. containers. But while the price point winds up being big, consumers will still spend the increase in price despite the smaller size because they want berries, regardless of cost," he continues. "It's a popular item and we're fortunate to have berries throughout the year. So don't hide the berries — get the product out in front of the customer. And if you want to sell two of a product, order five; if you want to sell 30 containers, order 40. The more you order, the more you're going to sell."

"Large lobby and front-of-department displays can increase strawberry sales by as much as 12 percent and total produce sales by five percent. On the other hand, sales can decrease by nine percent when displays are moved to the middle or back of the department!"

— Chris Christian, California Strawberry Commission

"Ensure that all berry package sizes are available to appeal to different customers," adds Christian. "For example, a typical strawberry set should include a 1-lb. conventional package, a 1-lb. organic package, and a larger option, such as a two-pounder."

"High consumption consumers will prefer an 18-oz. or larger package, and summer promotions of the 5-lb. bulk box can be highly successful," say Curry, "whereas aggressive retail price points on 6-oz. packs or pints tend to appeal to the typical consumer looking for a snacking option. It's important to cater to both."

Adding signage to displays can also catch consumers' eyes. "If they're locally grown or regional, celebrate that fact," Curry advises. "Utilize grower photos and farm photos, if possible. Display one sign with the berries, and another sign in the local section of your produce department."

"We put 'Keith Says' signs at points around the produce department that offer tips and nutritional information, and promote products we want to sell more of," says Fetterolf of Musser's Markets. "It's something we've done for years. Our customers look for that and it works. When Musser's Markets bought Foodland, our consumers asked, "Where are the 'Keith Says' signs?" So the new company put them back and it's really done well. The point is, you've got to communicate with your customers. It makes your berries, other produce products, and the department as a whole feel personal."

Running promotional ads and tying berries into holidays are other successful ways to draw attention to berries. "Put blueberries and strawberries with white grapes to boost sales around the Fourth of July," suggests Wetherbee of Diamond Blueberry.

"Displaying strawberries with ice cream in

the summer is a good way to boost sales of both products," adds Christian of the CSC. "And back-to-back weekly ad programs surrounding major holidays can show dollar increases of 11 percent and pound increases of 6.5 percent."

Nutritional Bang For The Buck

Consumers are becoming more and more knowledgeable about the nutritional value of berries, but it doesn't hurt to play up the health benefits via signage, recipe cards, and social media. "We feature QR codes on all of our packaging so consumers can scan the code and have instant access to care and handling information, nutritional information and recipes," details Jewel of California Giant Berry Farms. "Point of sale signage is always a good idea as well, but if it is not available, the QR code can help with that. We want to do everything we can to provide information to encourage getting our berries home with consumers. Once they get the berries home, we have even more information on the back of the label so they receive additional tips and links even after they open the container," she explains.

Ranno of Colorful Harvest agrees, adding, "Teaching that berries are the most nutrient-dense foods on the planet helps consumers understand that they are getting greater nutritional value per dollar. Point of sale signage and recipe cards are good for that. QR codes on signs or the package label are also a good way to direct consumers with mobile devices to online resources."

"Consumer education is a very important part of the purchase process," recognizes Christian. "We do a lot of work in this area to ensure consumers understand the nutritional benefits of strawberries, how to pick, use and store them, the product's attributes, and the safety steps taken in the growing process."

"Having a way to connect with consumers to receive feedback helps in creating and building a strong brand image in the marketplace," says Wishnatzki of Wish Farms. "We use 'How's My Picking?' powered by FreshQC, a patented tool for traceability that provides specific information of each individual package of produce. Data such as grower, field, picker, time of harvest, variety, planting date, nursery source, etc., is stored electronically," he explains. "FreshQC was originally developed as a system for quality control, but it quickly became a way for us to connect with our customers and hear about their experiences with our produce. Every package of Wish Farms produce features a sticker on top with the question: 'How's my picking?' This question invites consumers to tell us exactly what they think. People today like to know where their food comes from and with this technology, we have the ability to educate our consumers about our products and reassure them that they are feeding their families high quality food."

"More and more consumers are also interested in the healthy benefits of eating organic," recognizes Christian. "So creating an organic destination for berries and other organic produce items in the department, and also including organic berries in the regular berry cooler make it easy for consumers to purchase these items. But proper pricing should be evident in both locations to minimize confusion."

FSGA's Harrell agrees, adding a thought about the local trend. "When berries are locally grown, they should be promoted as local," she says. "Consumers are getting smarter about what their families are eating and where berries come from. And many want to buy local or organic."

Stiles of Redner's Markets notes, "When you throw in good nutrition with taste, it's an added plus that makes customers want it more."

King Of The Crop

While strawberries have long been the most popular berry among consumers, thanks to the many varieties that provide year-round availability, other berries are gaining in popularity, due to their health benefits, taste and ever growing availability. "Blueberries are a close second to strawberries, with blackberries gaining ground," reports Wetherbee of Diamond Blueberry.

"Strawberries remain the top-selling berry, and research shows that 'strawberry' is the favorite flavor among most kids," confirms Jewel. "It's interesting to note the growth of the blackberry category. While they are last in the category with regard to total sales, they see double-digit growth every year, thanks to their consistent delicious flavor and availability."

"I suspect that blackberries and blueberries have gained some ground in recent years because of the many news articles touting their antioxidant properties," adds Wishnatzki of Wish Farms.

Ranno of Colorful Harvest agrees, noting, "Growing consumer awareness of the health benefits of anti-oxidant-rich blueberries and blackberries is helping spur sales, along with increasing availability."

Curry of Curry & Co. adds, "Strawberries and blueberries compete for the top position in dollar sales, with blueberry sales and per-capita consumption growing at a much faster rate. But blackberry sales are growing at the fastest rate, and all berries, including raspberries, are the fastest growing category at retail."

"I think all berries work together and complement each other," says Jewel of California Giant Berry Farms. "Families with kids are big purchasers of berries, and typically everyone has their own favorite berry. Retailers can capitalize on the overall popularity of berries by offering mix-and-match type promotions so consumers can buy a variety of berry types for one price, preventing a difficult decision and increasing ring."

"It's also important to make a strategic plan for each season of your berry sales," states Curry. "In the first two weeks of the month, highlight the great health messages of fresh berries, and in the last two weeks of the month, focus on delicious recipes. But be creative and find recipes that make sense in your region. The bottom line is, change up the message of your marketing to attract different consumers throughout the year. That's the best way to maximize berry sales." **pb**

Sweet Potatoes: 10 Tips For A Mature Product Making New Waves

Creating well-conceived displays in prominent places, and paying close attention to freshness is just the beginning. **BY BOB JOHNSON**

Consumers are taking their newfound interest in sweet potatoes to the supermarket, thus driving category growth. Here are 10 tips for taking full advantage of this expanding opportunity.

Sweet potatoes are hot. This traditional holiday favorite is enjoying extraordinary growth for an already mature category. Sweet potatoes are benefiting from greater year-round availability. They have been helped by the introduction of value-added convenience products. But most important in their recent rise might be the spread of the good word that sweet potatoes are good for you. "We're experiencing double-digit growth," reports Ed Osowski, director of produce at Martin's Supermarkets, an independent chain with 21 stores based in South Bend, IN. "The focus on health and well-being is helping sweet potatoes. We do some nutritional information in the ads to support this trend."

"The trend has been up, it's been up the past three years," confirms Benny Graves, executive director of the Vardaman-based Mississippi Sweet Potato Council. "The growing popularity of sweet potato fries, along with the item's nutritional benefits have made them more popular. The category is up several tenths of a pound. Plus, there's a year-round supply now. We sell a lot more in the summer time, as they are popular during the grilling season."

"Consumption was 3.7 pounds per person 10 years ago, and it was at 6.4 pounds in 2011," reveals Sue Langdon, executive director of the Benson-based North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission. "Demand has been increasing steadily. As people become more aware of the health benefits, they have been eating more sweet potatoes."

News about the nutritional benefits is playing a large role in driving increased consumption of sweet potatoes. "Loaded with antioxidants, fiber and beta-carotene, sweet potatoes are a Super Food," points out Elena Hernandez, marketing and communications specialist for Mann Packing Co., in Salinas, CA. "Their nutrient density makes them a 'good carb,' and they continue to be heralded as the go-to diet food by nutrition experts."

Along with the nutrition experts, foodservice is introducing consumers to this healthy alternative. Consumers are taking their newfound interest in sweet potatoes to the supermarket, thus driving category growth. Here are 10 tips for taking full advantage of this expanding opportunity.

1. It Starts With A Good Looking Show

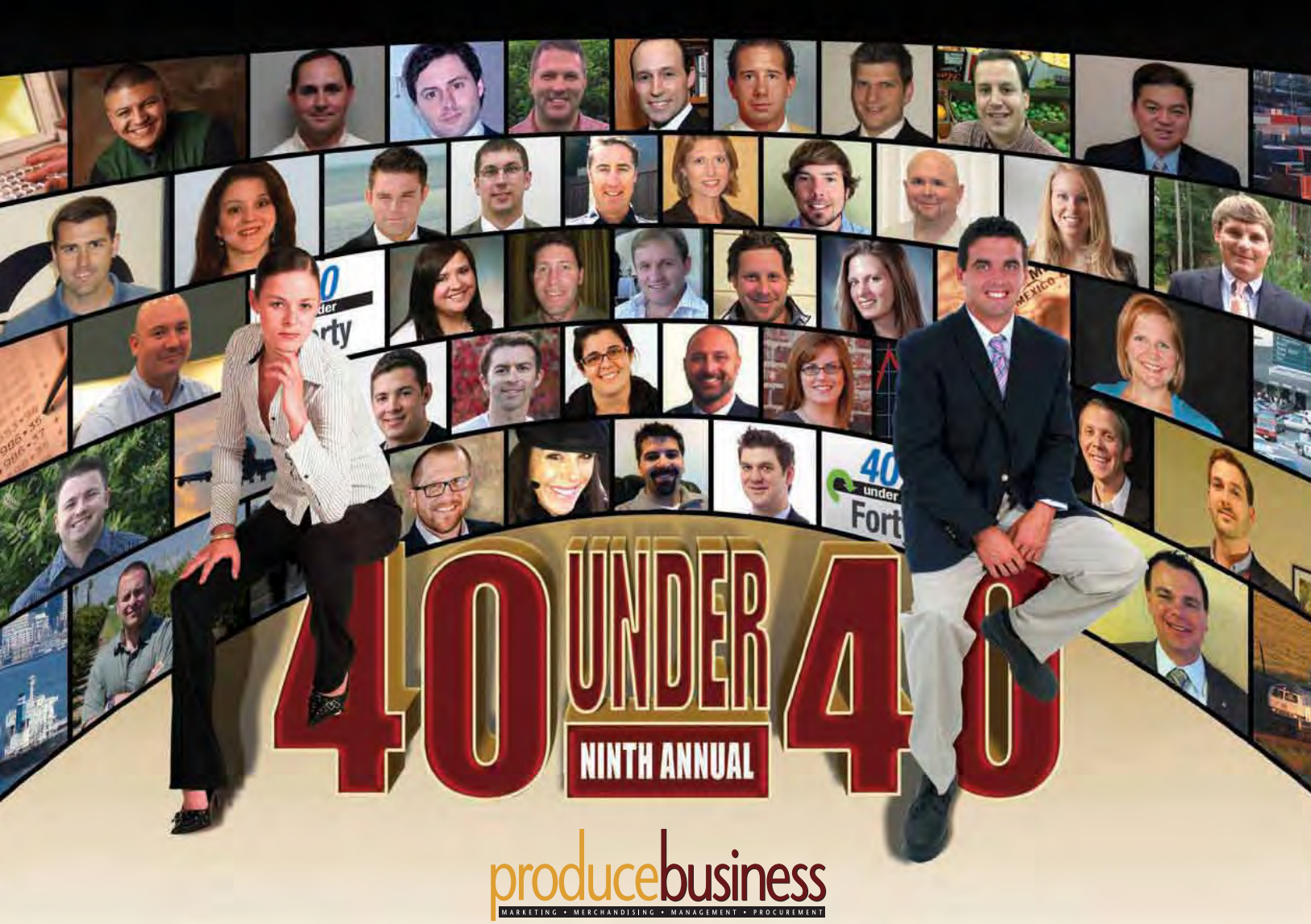
If there is one suggestion producers have for their retailer partners about sweet potatoes, it is to be vigilant about culling the display to keep the product fresh, and looking fresh. "The best tip I can offer is to keep the display fresh," says Mike Kemp, business analyst for Market Fresh, located in Nixa, MO. "Too many times when I am visiting with a retailer who complains of a lack of sweet potato sales, we look at the display and find product that is very tired-looking and needs to be culled out. Sweet potatoes are best if sold within 17 to 21 days of packing. To that end, Market Fresh does not pack product until we have a purchase order in hand."

Other suppliers agree that keeping the display fresh is paramount. "Rotate stock, watch for out-of-stocks, and sign the display well so consumers can find the product," advises Hernandez. "Stock sweet potatoes year-round in a well-signed location so consumers can find them, and then communicate powerhouse nutritional messages and usage ideas that are seasonal, like snacking or grilling."

2. Display In A Prominent Location

The best location is an end-cap or the front of the produce department, but there is a variety of opinions on the size of the display.

"A minimum display of two feet wide on retailers' dry-rack displays should be main-



producebusiness

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

Produce Business is accepting nominations for its Ninth Annual 40-Under-Forty Project, which recognizes the produce industry's top young leaders.

Honorees will be selected based on their professional accomplishments, demonstrated leadership and industry/community contributions. To be eligible, nominees must be under the age of 40 as of January 1 (People born after January 1, 1973).

To nominate someone, please fill out this form by March 1, 2013, and fax back to 561-994-1610.

Once nominated, the candidate will receive forms from us to fill out asking for detailed information. A candidate only needs to be nominated one time. Multiple nominations will have no bearing on selection.

ABOUT THE NOMINEE:

First Name _____ Last Name _____
Approximate Age _____
Company _____
Position _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____Postal Code _____
Country _____
Phone _____ Fax _____
E-mail _____

In 100 words or less, describe why this person should be nominated:
(You can use a separate sheet for this)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Nominee's Professional Achievements:

_____
_____
_____

Nominee's Industry/Community/Charitable Activities:

_____
_____
_____

ABOUT THE NOMINATOR:

First Name _____ Last Name _____
Company _____
Position _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____Postal Code _____
Country _____
Phone _____ Fax _____
E-mail _____

Nominator information is for internal use only and will not be shared with candidate or have a bearing on selection.

For more information email: info@producebusiness.com

"We have QR codes on our bags and cartons, which takes consumers to our website for more information, in addition to recipes. We also have recipes where there's room on every packaged product."

— Mike Kemp, Market Fresh

tained all-year," asserts Kemp. "There are four holidays where we see an increase in sweet potato sales: Easter, Mother's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. During those times, expanded or secondary displays will generate more sales and profits."

Others suggest taking the Euro table as a size guide for sweet potato displays. "The optimal display size is 3 3/4- x 4-ft., which is the size of one Euro table," details George Wooten, president of Wayne E. Bailey Produce Co., headquartered in Chadbourn, NC. "An end-cap is the best location, and if that's not available, a Euro table close to the front of the produce department will do."

The Holiday season is the obvious time to go above and beyond with the sweet potato display. Frank Mesa, sales manager at Livingston, CA-based Garcia Farms Produce, shares, "Our best time is November and December. We had some huge displays in some supermarkets, and they did very well. It varies from season to season, but if you have good pricing and promotable volumes, you do well with a waterfall display."

According to research by the Perishables Group, well over 40 percent of all retail sweet potato sales for the entire year occur in the fourth quarter.

3. Keep Promoting Post-Holiday

Chicago, IL-based sweet potatoes are finding new audiences, and more uses, over a longer period of time. "Sales pick up during the Holiday season because we promote them and put them on ad," says Michael Purvis, director of produce merchandising at Nashville, GA-based Harveys Supermarkets, a subsidiary of Food Lion, which has 70 stores. "Our customers love sweet potatoes, so in the South, they don't drop off that much after the Holidays. They're probably one of our Top 15 items in produce."

Even retailers outside the South, however, are finding that, with a little effort, sweet potatoes can continue to be a significant item after the last Christmas tree has been sent to the curb. "The Holidays are certainly peak season, but we can still run 35 to 40 percent of the Holiday peak through the winter," says Martin's Osowski. "That's with promoting them, though; you can't just put them out there."

4. Rely On Suppliers For POS Materials

Signage and a visible displays are important pieces of successful promotions, and many suppliers provide POS materials, which can help keep sweet potatoes top of mind throughout the year. "We have a Green Giant and a George Foods display stand that is great for produce," says Wooten. "It has POP info built into the stand. We provide recipes, our website address and information on the Green Giant Box Top program."

Mann Packing also offers a line of marketing materials to support the sales of its fresh-cut sweet potatoes, including POS, recipes and coupons.

Charlotte Vick-Ferrell, partner and sales manager at Vick Family Farm, located in Wilson, NC, shares, "We have recipe booklets that we give away, as well as nutritional information. Consumer education is a key player in the growth of the sweet potato industry. Sweet potatoes have a reputation for being a holiday vegetable, but we can break that reputation by informing consumers about healthy ways to prepare sweet potatoes all year."

Educational material can even be on the bag, for customers to scan with their Smartphones. Kemp's Market Fresh says, "We have QR codes on our bags and cartons, which takes consumers to our website for more information, in addition to recipes. We also have recipes where there's room on every packaged product."

To be effective, the prominent display of fresh looking sweet potatoes must complement a regular schedule of promotions and advertisements. "Keep a fairly large display up, and make sure it is fresh," adds Kemp. "We have also found successful retailers are those that advertise or promote the products on a regular basis — no less than once per month."

5. Find The Right Companion Products

When there is room, use display to cross-promote sweet potatoes with a range of complementary items. According to Kemp, "Brown sugar and marshmallows seem to be the most common, but more and more consumers are discovering that it is not necessary to add the additional calories and flavor to enjoy this product. Market Fresh offers a two-tier, low-profile merchandise display that works well as a secondary display, either near these complementary items, or next to the ham bunkers."

There are many other cooking items that can also be merchandised with sweet potatoes. Hernandez of Mann Packing suggests, "Cross-merchandise fresh-cut sweet potatoes with complementary cooking items such as olive oil, seasoning and Reynolds wrap."

You can also display sweet potatoes with other foods that, together, create a Super Food display. "Sweet potatoes can and should be cross-merchandised with nutritional items and Super Foods, such as kale, and baking items just to name a few," says Wooten of Wayne E. Bailey.

Because uses for sweet potatoes change with the seasons, so, too, should retailers' cross-merchandising methods. "The versatility and seasonality of sweet potatoes should be prevalent in the display techniques, such as highlighting summer barbecue season and cold weather stews as well as the many Holiday options," Wooten says.

Sweet potatoes benefit from placement, in particular, in a location that lets them compete with white potatoes. "The primary location needs to be with the other potato offerings," stresses Kemp. "Because of the nutritional benefits of sweet potatoes, consumers are beginning to trade from white potatoes to sweet potatoes."

6. Offer A Range Of Price Points

Periodic promotional pricing moves sweet potatoes, but providers are also finding other new innovations in both pricing and packaging. "A lot of people are trying the small 3-lb. bag," notes Jimmy Burch Sr., partner in Faison, NC-based Burch Farms. "It started five or six years ago, and every year it's growing compared to the bulk offering.

Another innovation that is gaining traction is pricing by-the-'each' pricing for some sweet potato products. "By-the-each has been a new category for Wada that is gaining traction," shares Shane Watt, vice president for production and sweet potatoes at Wada Farms Marketing, headquartered in Idaho Falls, ID.

A range of product sizes and prices seems to help optimize the category. "Offering a variety of SKUs has been an effective way of keeping the sweet potato highlighted," adds Wyatt, "which includes being sold by the each, in 5-lb. bags, 3-lb. bags, bulk and microwaveable in various sizes."

The best pricing strategy seems to depend on whether retailers are offering bulk sweet potatoes in the bag, or individual sweet potatoes. "Bulk is best priced by the pound," details Wooten, "while individuals do well in a 10-for-10 type sale, and the steamers and bags do well with a 2-for-$X-type sale," Wooten suggests.

Other suppliers suggest a similar strategy for bulk and individual pricing. Market Fresh's Kemp reveals, "We have found that pound pricing works the best on bulk product, while by-the-each pricing is best for our microwaveable sweets."

7. Offer Favorite Local Variety

There are differences of opinion on which sweet potato variety is the best, and in some areas, particularly in the South, these opinions are held with some passion. "In Louisiana, we think we have the best; the Beauregard is the biggest variety," says Mary Gallent, marketing specialist at the Baton Rouge-based Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission. "There's a new one called Orleans; it's getting to the point more growers are planting it."

This new variety could become the next favorite in Louisiana, and maybe beyond. "The Orleans are sweeter, they're less stringy and richer in that dark orange color," Gallent says.

Out West, suppliers report a different consumer favorite. The Red Diane variety does best on the West Coast, according to Mesa from Garcia Farms. Red Diane has a rose-colored exterior, bright orange, tender, moist flesh and an oblong shape. It is a cross between the Beauregard and the Garnet.

The Covington, from North Carolina, is a lighter skinned variety and it may be the leader nationwide. "The Covington variety has been the dominant variety for our area," reports Vick-Ferrell of Vick Family Farm. "It seems to develop in a more uniform and desirable shape than the Beauregard variety. Also, the Covington has a good shelf-life, which is required when shipping overseas

Some say the Covington is the best variety period, regardless of area. "Covington is the best variety and it is good in all regions," Wayne E. Bailey's Wooten says.

The predominance of one variety or another can come back to differences in the local soil. "Some of these varieties simply don't do well outside of their area," points out Wayne Garber, managing partner at Iota, LA-based Garber Farms. "For example, the Covington does well in its home state of North Carolina, but not in other places; same with the Beauregard in Louisiana."

The offspring of Beauregard, Orleans, could become more important in Louisiana production. "The new Louisiana variety, Orleans, is higher in beta-carotene, has a more orange-colored flesh and a more uniform shape," describes Garber. "It merchandises well because of its appearance."

One cause of differences in variety preference is the growing number of consumers who want to buy local produce. "In the past couple of years, consumers are becoming more and more concerned about where their produce is grown and how it is handled," acknowledges Vick-Ferrell. "This increasing concern is pushing consumers to look a little closer to home for their produce. Buying locally grown produce supports local businesses, which gives consumer a sense of community."

As with many produce items with sweet potatoes, local looks to be the new organic. "Locally grown makes a bigger impact than organics at the moment," confirms Wooten.

Others agree that locally grown has become the new organic. "Organic is losing some of its pizzazz, as we are seeing more emphasis being placed on locally grown," confirms Market Fresh's Kemp. "However, that term is sometimes abused since there is no clear definition of local. It appears each retailer defines that on their own," Kemp says.

8. Offer Varietal Choice

It is wise for retailers to be positioned to source a number of different sweet potato varieties from a number of different regions. "There are regional preferences, but that varies from market to market," admits Kemp. "Sometimes those preferences are driven more by what retailers have always offered and are comfortable marketing, versus what consumers actually want. We have customers with retail outlets nationwide who buy product from the same growing area for all their outlets, and we have customers who are in those same markets that hang their hat on another growing area."

One way to manage differences of opinion on sweet potatoes is to put a number of varieties out, see what happens, and be ready to adjust to suit your customers' preferences. "There are absolutely personal preferences among varieties," says Garcia Farms' Mesa. "Stores are carrying three or four varieties, and they adjust."

9. Offer Numerous Sweet Potato Products

In addition to carrying a wide variety of sweet potatoes, retailers are also encouraged to consistently carry a number of different sweet potato products. Harveys' Purvis shares, "We carry three types of sweet potatoes — microwaveable, a smaller #2 and a larger #1. We keep a #1 size loose, and a #2 in a number 4 tray, with five or six to a tray. Some customers want a smaller sweet potato because they cook faster, so this gives them another option."

Sweet potato sales are expected to continue increasing because the category is receiving help from both the foodservice sector and the nutrition researchers. "Sweet potato consumption is increasing due to their year-round availability and their growing popularity on America's menus," says Mann's Hernandez. "National restaurant chains, for example, substitute sweet potatoes for traditional potatoes for health-conscious consumers and more adventurous eaters. They are not just for the holidays anymore; aging baby boomers, moms and foodies alike are buying these colorful, delicious vegetables."

10. Control The Quality

Suppliers predict increased demand for sweet potatoes for at least the next few years. "Demand seems to be growing at about five percent a year," reports Garber of Garber Farms. "All of the big restaurants are serving sweet potatoes these days. Fast food restaurants are driving the increase. People are making the sweet potato a regular part of their diets. It's no longer just a holiday item."

But retailers must do their part to take full advantage of this opportunity. The sweet potatoes have to look good to close the deal, and they have to taste good to gain repeat customers. "You must be consistent with your flavor," stresses Harveys' Purvis. **pb**

Dried Fruits And Nuts — The Athlete's Choice

Peanuts and baseball have been a great team for decades, but a range of dried fruits and nuts are steadily increasing as the snack of choice among health-conscious sports enthusiasts.

BY BOB JOHNSON

PHOTO COURTESY OF AURORA PRODUCTS, INC.

Easy grab-and-go packaging encourages sports enthusiasts to choose healthy dried fruit and nut mixes for game time snacking.

It's no surprise dried fruit and nuts are particularly popular during the Holiday Season and the sports championships that follow, but they are becoming a year-round snack of choice among consumers interested in healthier lifestyles. Joseph Pagano, director of produce at Inserra Supermarkets, an independently owned retailer based in Mahwah, NJ, with 20 stores, confirms, "We are definitely selling more dried fruits and nuts. I've noticed the uptick within the past year-and-a-half or so, due to the health kick."

Some of the better-promoted nut and dried fruit products are even challenging the best-known competition in the battle for market share. "Wonderful pistachios has a couple of SKUs in the Top 20 of the $12 billion salty snack category," shares Marc Seguin, vice president for marketing at Paramount Farms, based in Los Angeles, CA. "It's pretty much chip companies on all sides of us in the Top 20. We took a healthy item that people like and combined it with a brand that is fun. We've been averaging over 30 percent growth the past four years."

Sporting Events As Snack Food Opportunities

Some snacks are a perfect fit with certain sporting events, like peanuts and baseball games. "Our peanuts are a natural fit with baseball and football," says Debi Grimsby, marketing manager at Hampton Farms, in Huntersville, NC. "In-shell peanuts are a great snack, and they're fun to share. The game experience isn't complete until you have that bag of peanuts in hand. Hampton Farms is an official licensee of Major League Baseball, and the team bags are available through our retail partners during baseball season. In addition, our Hampton Farms brand is available at many Major and Minor League stadiums across the country," adds Grimsby.

Recently, the Super Bowl has emerged as the king of all snack food opportunities. "I'm certain that 10 percent of our annual consumption just occurred surrounding the week of the Super Bowl," contends Seguin. "It's probably 20 to 30 percent bigger than Christmas week. The next best-focused selling week is March Madness — the college basketball championships. Sporting events are a great time to sell this wonderful snack nut."

Paramount invests heavily to capitalize on this snacking opportunity. "We do a lot of sports-related merchandising, starting with our Super Bowl ad for Wonderful pistachios," states Seguin. "We will put 50,000 displays in stores before the Super Bowl. We work hand-in-hand with our retail partners to accomplish this."

Retailers find that the entire dried fruit and nut category reaches peak demand for the Super Bowl. "For the Super Bowl the category just blows up," says Inserra's Pagano. "It does well for all the holidays, too, including Thanksgiving and Christmas."

Other producers are also finding promotional opportunities for healthful snacks at sporting events that come weeks or months after New Year's resolutions are made. According to Joe Tamble, vice president of sales at Sun-Maid Growers of California, based in Kingsburg, CA, "With everything that dried fruit has to offer to consumers, events and parties are exposing new users to the outstanding features of dried fruits as snacks. As health and wellness become more of a focus for many adults and children, dried fruit provides party-goers with a snacking option that makes them feel good about their snacking choices."

Event-based promotion of dried fruits and nuts can increase sales substantially. "Most retailers that get behind event-based marketing are rewarded for their efforts," points out Jane

HERB & SPECIALTY SHOWCASE

The **Horseradish House Company**

J.R. KELLY

Year-Round Shipper of Horseradish Roots

Shrink Wrap
Individual Horseradish

Repacking
5 & 10 lb. bags
Washing Available

Dennis Diekemper – Sales

618.344.2910
888.344.4392
703 S. Bluff Rd.
Collinsville, IL 62234

★★★★ XXXX

GOURMET SPECIALTY IMPORTS L.L.C.

"Your Shallot Source"

FRESH AND PEELED
SHALLOTS
PEELED GARLIC
PEARL ONIONS
CIPPOLINI ONIONS
FINGERLING POTATOES

Year-Round Availability

CONSUMER PACKS AVAILABLE FOR RETAIL

Call Cary or Kenny
610.345.1113
West Grove, PA

SOUTHERN SPECIALTIES

Premium Specialty Produce

954.784.6500
southernspecialties.com

THE PIONEER IN SPECIALTY VEGETABLES SINCE 1986

Growing Year-Round on California's Central Coast

Babé Farms® Since 1986

Family Owned & Operated
Babé Farms, Santa Maria, CA
800.648.6772 • sales@babefarms.com
www.babefarms.com
See Us At CPMA Booth #329

Diamond Direct Farms
WWW.DIAMONDDIRECTFARMS.COM |
EMAIL: INFO@DIAMONDDIRECTFARMS.COM

DIAMOND DIRECT FARMS

Nationwide supply of Fresh Herbs, Micro Greens, and Specialty Produce

New! MicroGreens!

LUCINDA'S FRESH FUSION

CHECK OUT OUR NEWEST COOKING DEMO & RECIPES

- Extended Item Flavor Station Selections
- New Extended Shelf Life MAP Enviro-Bags
- Microwavable Vegetable Bags

831.476.9733 | Chick Goodman | chick.goodman@comcast.net

Asmar, vice president for sales at the National Raisin Co., in Fowler, CA. "Dried fruit is a great vehicle for stores to leverage because it doesn't require any in-store handling, like refrigeration, and because dried fruit is used as a snack, a topping and an ingredient, it can be co-promoted with other categories. The incremental sales potential is substantial!"

An important part of the appeal of many of these snacks is that they are interesting and delicious, as well as nutritious. "The people we're going after are the foodies," says Linda Cain, vice president of retail sales and marketing at Valley Fig Growers, in Fresno, CA. "For example, figs make a good finger food for Super Bowl parties."

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMPTON FARMS

The Athlete's Choice

The nutritional value of dried fruits and nuts is making them the choice of those who play sports, in addition to those who prefer watching from the sidelines. "We've found runners and cyclists are very interested in figs," states Cain. "They have a lot of trace minerals like copper, magnesium, manganese and iron, as well as being a good source of fiber and calcium. Figs have more calcium than milk, and more potassium than bananas."

Producers are finding opportunities to include their healthy fruit and nut snacks at a range of local sporting events. "We merchandise our product line at several local 5k events, as well as larger races such as the Boston Marathon," shares Stephanie Blackwell, owner and president of Stratford, CT-based Aurora Products, Inc. "Every year we promote our nut and trail mix line, which contains both dried fruits and nuts, for the Super Bowl. We have a local arena in Bridgeport, CT, a city next to our headquarters, in which we sponsor one of the State's hockey teams — the Bridgeport Tigers. The games are popular with locals, and we sponsor many of their games."

Many dried fruit products reach their peak demand at times that correspond with the schedule of participatory sporting events. Tamble acknowledges, "Sales of Sun-Maid raisins and dried fruits spike at certain times of the year. In addition to the popularity of Sun-Maid's 6-Pack during Back-to-School time, they are also a popular post-game snack at youth soccer games. Sun-Maid Mini Snack raisins are popular during marathon season to provide runners with a quick energy boost during the race," he details.

Some firms use major sporting events as an opportunity to reach out to the youth of the community, like Hampton Farms' sponsorship of events related to the Orange Bowl football game. "We enjoy a great partnership with the Orange Bowl," says Grimsby. "Our sponsorship helps to support the Orange Bowl Youth Football Alliance (OBYFA) and the Park of the Week program, which recognizes youth football parks across South Florida each Saturday during the fall with a caravan-style celebration that includes a commemorative plaque and financial contributions for park improvements. It's a perfect opportunity to help teach young athletes to make healthy snack choices."

Moreover, there is a crossover among consumers who want dried fruits as fuel for their own sporting activities, and those who want them as snacks while they watch sporting events.

Strut Your Dried Fruits (And Nuts)

Many of the dried fruit and nut snacks have the appeal of not only being more healthful than the potato or corn chip competition, but also more interesting. "Figs pair nicely with all cheeses," says Cain of Valley Fig. "We suggest pairing them together at retail. Bring some parmesan to the produce department, or some figs to the cheese case in the deli," she suggests.

The key to success for all of these promotions is attractive displays put up in prominent, visible spots. Inserra's Pagano details, "We have racks in the back of the produce department for dried fruits and nuts. The packages have nutritional information, and we put out a bit of additional information, as well."

Studies have shown that good displays can translate into staggering increases in dried fruit or nut sales. According to Sun-Maid's Tamble, "The easiest way for retailers to encourage dried fruit purchases for sports snacks or anytime snacks is to get it up on display. Sales data, according to IRI, validates that Sun-Maid raisin sales increase by 60 percent due to displays. Combine a feature ad with displays and sales of Sun-Maid raisins increase by over 260 percent. What's more, more than 20 percent of total dried fruit category dollars are generated from displays," he reports.

But an attractive display is just one piece — albeit an important piece — of a promotion campaign for dried fruits and nuts. "We want our displays at the checkout stands, in the lobby, pretty much everywhere our non-healthy competitors are," Paramount's Seguin says. But he adds, "You need to have a good promotional price, and they need to be in the circular because that cues consumers that something special is going on."

Suppliers offer a range of promotional aids. Aurora's Blackwell notes, "For supermarkets, we offer scanning discounts and store ads. We also offer products in shippers with attractive header cards. For races and local events, we give out snack pack bags and t-shirts to runners."

Other producers are also offering promotional aids. "Sun-Maid Growers partners with many retailers to successfully promote Sun-Maid raisins and dried fruit as sports snacks," Tamble says. "Many retailers have health-focused initiatives that are important to their core business values, and Sun-Maid is often a key partner in these programs."

Help with promotion extends to offering dried fruits and nuts in a range of packaging options that suit consumers' needs. "National Raisin supplies products in all kinds of consumer and bulk packaging," says Asmar. "Our consumer packages fit most needs, including single-serve, portion-controlled boxes to more economical resealable bags." She adds, "National Raisin is predominately a private label supplier, so we assist our customers with their efforts. Consumers will generally see these programs in the form of on-pack graphics, secondary merchandising, in-store point-of-sale and thematically oriented shippers." **pb**

Blue Book Services provides in-depth information on companies throughout the fresh produce supply chain.

Find fresh produce companies including growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, transporters, etc.

Search by company name, commodities, geographic region, pay descriptions, integrity rating, business classification, and more!

Call for a free Webinar or Trial Membership!
630.668.3500

Visit us at CPMA booth 622 or United booth 619

Blue Book Services | *Profit from Experience*
630.668.3500 | info@bluebookservices.com | www.producebluebook.com

THE NEED FOR REAL EXECUTION

After a promotion or initiative is completed, there is always an evaluation as to the success (or failure) of the program. Accompanying this evaluation is a general "blame" session as to the deficiencies in execution of the program. Management always wants to know why the promotion or initiative didn't reach the levels of success they had anticipated or was a failure in gaining even minimal success. They seem to be dumbfounded when we, in the produce operation, don't seem to have an answer. No matter how many times I have experienced this situation, it always seems to be clear that management "just doesn't get it."

In a project, the execution requires different paths for different departments. While it would seem that executing a program in the produce department would be simple, it actually requires a complex set of circumstances to be successful. Management does not realize the complexity of produce, in general, and the requirements to ensure that the execution will meet expectations. The challenge that faces produce in execution is the need for training the personnel to perform the new tasks being asked of them.

As we all know, in our present cost-cutting environment at retail, anything that cannot be analytically measured and can show to be a positive benefit to the company in a numeric sense is usually removed in the fervor of cost-cutting. Unfortunately, training (along with regularly scheduled cleaning) is one of the items that fall under this category. While it's certain training will show benefits in the long run, rarely does management have the patience to wait long enough for the results to show. I have always found that experience teaches us that to eliminate training is shortsighted. Not only does it diminish the development of personnel, but it also has a great effect on employee morale, and ultimately, execution. By not providing the ability to learn and refine "produce skills," we are perpetuating the lack of execution problem as well as the high turnover rate within the produce department. If we do not provide the tools — namely, training — to successfully complete the tasks assigned, how do we expect employees to execute at the level required?

Therefore, it can be said, that good execution without training is a myth. The solution is basically a simple fix. Like many others in the produce operation, all that is required is a commitment to the concept of training and resources necessary to implement it. The most successful and innovative retailers today embrace training as a key aspect of their operation. They focus on the development and advancement of their personnel, and that focus is reflected in the execution at retail. To be successful with such a commitment requires the allocation of time for training each employee in each week's work schedule.

This does not mean the training must be in the traditional formal format, but can sometimes be most effective during operating hours by demonstration out on the sales floor. We have discussed before the benefits of mentorship in a previous article, but it remains one of the most effective tools available for specific training and development of skills. The fact remains that to improve execution, an organization must commit to a training program, regardless of the format, to prepare its personnel to perform their tasks well and make the project a success.

By instituting such a program, the retailer gains many advantages. Not only will execution and the competence of its employees improve, but also its image with its employees and customers improves. Well trained employees not only execute their duties better than those who are not trained, but they also are happier, more content employees, which carries through to positive interactions with customers. Additionally, the employee develops a better self-image along with a better perception of the company and upper management's concern for their welfare. While these benefits may not be immediately visible or show up on the balance sheet, they provide a foundation for taking the produce operation to the next level.

Well trained employees not only execute their duties better than those who are not trained, but they also are happier, more content employees, which carries through to positive interactions with customers.

It may well be the time to introduce and promote to management the value of training. The next time management requires an answer as to why the execution of a program was lacking, remind them the employees were destined to fail as they were not provided with the skills (training) that was needed to accomplish their task. It may not be the most popular answer, but it provides the solution to continued disappointment with the levels of execution. Ultimately, in the long run, the success of any retail operation is dependent upon its employees, and the better trained and skilled employees are, the better the chances are for growth and success. In the big picture, it represents a small investment for a big return. **pb**

By Don Harris

Don Harris is a 38-year veteran of the produce industry, with most of that time spent in retail. He has worked in every aspect of the industry, from "field-to-fork" in both the conventional and organic arenas. Harris is presently consulting on all subjects of retail, category development and sales strategies, among others. Comments can be directed to editor@producebusiness.com

DISCOVER A WORLD OF PRODUCE!

Network with produce industry professionals, learn about all the industry has to offer and build your business in Canada.

88th ANNUAL

CPMA CONVENTION +TRADESHOW TORONTO 2013

April 17-19, 2013

DIRECT ENERGY CENTRE
TORONTO (ON) CANADA

REGISTER ONLINE, it's quick and easy!

cpma.ca

MOVING THE EUROPEAN SCHOOL FRUIT SCHEME INTO THE FUTURE

In times of long-term declining, or at best, stagnating fresh produce consumption patterns in Europe — around one serving per day per capita has been lost in the past 10 years — rising trends of obesity and the burden of diet-related diseases, getting children in touch with fresh fruit and vegetables is of paramount importance.

One major step in the right direction is the EU School Fruit Scheme (SFS), a program that was heavily supported from the beginning by Freshfel and its members. It is a voluntary scheme, which provides school children with fruit and vegetables, aiming to encourage good and healthy eating habits among them. As they are more exposed to junk food rich in salt, fats and sugar, getting the youngest to repeatedly taste different fruit and vegetables will give them the opportunity to become acquainted with new flavors and lead them to new consumption habits. But also for the fresh produce sector, it is a great program that provides new opportunities of supply for growers and traders, and educating the future consumers.

The School Fruit Scheme began in 2009, and currently reaches more than 8 million school children in 54,000 schools. The European Commission is providing €90 million per year for the provision of fruit and vegetables in schools. Governments still need to co-finance the program and have the choice of whether to participate or not. Italy, Romania, Germany and Poland have been the main beneficiaries of these EU funds in recent years, with 24 (out of 27) Member States participating. The preferred products in the first years have been apples, oranges, bananas, carrots, tomatoes and cucumbers, and children have enjoyed additional activities such as farm visits, school gardens, and cooking sessions.

The report concludes that if the scheme is given long-term continuity, it can be seen as an appropriate tool to exercise positive influences on children's eating habits.

However, increased actions on the awareness and communication of the scheme at large are necessary in order to involve even more kids and parents and their schools, as today, many of them are still unfamiliar with the scheme. Therefore, Freshfel has decided to help in closing this gap by its own means, building on efforts to spread the word to Enjoy Fresh (as started by Freshfel's *www.enjoyfresh.eu* in 2011). Freshfel launched KidsEnjoyFresh (*www.kidsenjoyfresh.eu*) in June 2012, providing kids, their parents and school teachers a unique online platform to discover the world of fresh produce.

KidsEnjoyFresh is the first pan-European online platform to highlight the pleasure of fresh produce consumption. Children find a whole range of entertaining and educational interactive games and activities at the online website, which will hopefully encourage their curiosity to explore fresh fruits and vegetables. Parents will get first-hand suggestions on how to encourage children's consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in addition to tips for storage and handling and an exhaustive recipes list. At the same time, general health and nutritional information is also available. Finally, Freshfel is bringing the SFS closer to teachers, enabling them to get in touch with relevant authorities and bringing fresh produce into classrooms and to youngsters in general. While being active with its own initiatives, Freshfel continues to advocate for strong communication on a European level by public authorities, which will ensure a wide and lasting success of the scheme.

Already the first results seem to be very promising. According to the latest evaluation report on the SFS from autumn 2012, the short-term results provided by most of the national and regional evaluations indicate that the scheme has led to an increase in the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed by children. The report concludes that if the scheme is given long-term continuity, it can be seen as an appropriate tool to exercise positive influences on children's eating habits. This external evaluation also indicated a number of recommendations to improve the scheme, which Freshfel has supported for quite some time. Among these are:

- An increase of the EU funding to enlarge the School Fruit Scheme's scale and strengthen the impact on children's eating habits. Currently, up to €150 million are under discussion.
- A high continuity of distribution, since longer participation makes a higher sustainable impact with respect to improving the eating habits of children more likely. A frequency of offering fruits and vegetables as often as possible, at least three times a week, seems to be optimal for the effectiveness of the scheme. And a choice of products of at least five to 10 different fruit and vegetables should be offered, which is important to keep the children's interests.
- To make accompanying measures for the scheme also eligible for EU aid, in order to strengthen their role.

In its agricultural policy reform proposals, the European Commission intends to further strengthen the scheme by raising the overall EU budget available for it, increasing the rates of co-financing and extending the list of eligible measures. This would allow even more children to benefit from this very popular scheme, help in combating obesity and diet-related diseases, and ensure the fresh produce business can turn the tide and increase the consumption in the long-run. **pb**

By Sebastian Kruse

Sebastian Kruse is the Policy Advisor of Supply Chain and Communication for Freshfel Europe, based in Brussels, Belgium

MARCH 2013

Receive supplier information fast using the PRODUCE BUSINESS Information Showcase. Here's How:
Contact the advertiser directly via the Website, e-mail, or phone listed in the ad.

COMPANY	PAGE #	PHONE	WEBSITE
Alpine Fresh	66-67	800-292-8777	www.alpinefresh.com
APEAM (Avocado Producers & Exporting Packers of Michoacan)	129		www.avocadosfrommexico.com/trade
Apio, Inc.	90-91	800-454-1355	www.apioinc.com
Apio, Inc.	86-87	800-454-1355	www.apioinc.com
Maurice A. Auerbach, Inc.	88-89	201-807-9292	www.auerpak.com
Ayco Farms, Inc.	66-67	954-788-6800	www.aycofarms.com
Babe Farms, Inc.	143	800-648-6772	www.babefarms.com
Baero North America, Inc.	Floral 8-9	314-692-2270	www.baerousa.com
Baero North America, Inc.	96-97	314-692-2270	www.baerousa.com
Baldor Specialty Foods, Inc.	5	718-860-9100	www.baldorfood.com
Bard Valley Medjool Date Growers	82-83	928-726-9191	www.naturaldelights.com
Big Red Tomato Packers	42	772-466-0700	www.bigredtomatopackers.com
Blazer Wilkinson	135	831-455-3700l	
Blue Book Services	145	630-668-3500	www.producebluebook.com
Booth Ranches, LLC	80-81	559-626-7653	www.boothranches.com
Brooks Tropicals	108-109	800-327-4833	www.brookstropicals.com
Brooks Tropicals	70-71	800-327-4833	www.brookstropicals.com
California Avocado Commission	68-69	800-344-4333	www.californiaavocado.com/retail
Canadian Produce Marketing Association	147	613-226-4187	www.cpma.ca
Canadian Produce Marketing Association	26	613-226-4187	www.cpma.ca
Capital City Fruit Co., Inc.	24	515-981-5111	www.capitalcityfruit.com
CarbAmericas	66-67	954-786-0000	www.carbamericas.com
Catania Worldwide	94-95	416-236-9394	
Certified Greenhouse Farmers	45	559-221-2656	www.certifiedgreenhouse.com
Chelan Fresh Marketing	78-79	509-682-3854	www.chelanfresh.com
Church Brothers, LLC	39	831-796-1000	
Ciruli Brothers	100-101	520-281-9696	www.cirulibrothers.com
Coast To Coast Produce Co.	35	877-836-6295	www.ctcproduce.com
Community Suffolk, Inc.	32	617-389-5200	www.community-suffolk.com
Concord Foods	25	508-580-1700	www.concordfoods.com
CrunchPak	17	509-782-7753	www.crunchpak.com
Crystal Valley Foods	66-67	800-359-5631	www.crystalvalleyfoods.com
Customized Brokers	66-67	305-471-8989	www.customizedbrokers.net
D'Arrigo Bros. Co. of New York	31	800-223-8080	www.darrigony.com
Del Monte Fresh Produce	152	800-950-3683	www.freshdelmonte.com
Des Moines Truck Brokers, Inc.	52	515-981-5115	www.dmtb.com
Diamond Direct Marketing	143	305-545-5516	www.diamonddirectfarms.com
Dole Fresh Fruit Company	72-73	818-879-6600	www.dole.com
Dole Fresh Fruit Company	74-75	818-879-6600	www.dole.com
Dole Fresh Vegetable Co.	2	800-333-5454	www.berries.dole.com
Domex Superfresh Growers	62-63	509-966-1814	www.superfreshgrowers.com
dProduce Man Software	58	888-PRODMAN	www.dproduceman.com
Eaton & Eustis Co.	30	617-884-0298	
Fierman Produce Exchange	24	718-893-1640l	
Floral Business	16	561-994-1118	www.floralbusinessmagazine.com
Florida Department of Agriculture	43	850-488-4303	www.freshfromflorida.com
Fresh Quest	102-103	954-946-9554	
General Produce, Inc.	36	800-782-5833	www.generalproduceinc.com
Genpro Transportation Services, Inc.	53	00-243-6770	www.genproinc.com
Gourmet Specialty Imports LLC	143	610-345-1113	
Gourmet Trading Company	67	310-216-7575	www.gourmettrading.net
Great Lakes Int'l Trading, Inc.	23	231-947-2141	www.glit.com
Grimmway Farms	76-77	661-845-9435	www.grimmway.com
Harris Produce Vision	26	269-903-7481	
Harvest Sensations	66-67	305-591-8173	www.harvestsensations.com
Hollandia Produce	92-93	805-684-4146	www.livegourmet.com
House Foods America Corporation	41	714-901-4350	
Idaho Potato Commission	7	208-334-2350	www.idahopotato.com/retail
Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Promotion Committee	106-107	888-466-4667	www.usaonions.com
Inline Plastics Corp.	57	800-826-5567	www.inlineplastics.com
J.R. Kelly Company	143	888-344-4392	www.jrkelly.com
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	116-117	717-597-2112	www.keystonefruit.com
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	66-67	717-597-2112	www.keystonefruit.com
LGS Specialty Sales, Ltd.	131	800-796-2349	www.lgssales.com
Mann Packing Company, Inc.	122-123	800-884-6266	www.veggiesmadeeasy.com
Mann Packing Company, Inc.	9	800-884-6266	www.veggiesmadeeasy.com
Marie's	112-113	847-699-8310	www.maries.com
Mission Produce, Inc.	66-67	888-549-3421	www.missionpro.com
MIXTEC Group	27	626-440-7077	www.mixtec.net
Monterey Mushrooms	104-105	636-587-2771	www.montereymushrooms.com
NAPAR	37	202-441-8935	www.naparassoc.org
Naturipe Berry Growers	114-115	831-722-3505	www.naturipefarms.com
New England Produce Council	49	781-273-0444	www.newenglandproduce.com
New Limeco LLC	28	800-843-3508	www.newlimeco.com
Nickey Gregory Company, LLC.	33	404-366-7410	
Ocean Mist Farms	64-65	831-633-2492	www.oceanmist.com
Penang Nursery	Floral-13	407-886-2322	
Peri & Sons Farms	27	775-463-4444	www.periandsons.com
The Perishable Specialist, Inc.	52	305-477-9906	www.theperishablespecialist.com
The Perishable Specialist, Inc.	66-67	305-477-9906	www.theperishablespecialist.com
Produce for Better Health Found.	126	302-235-2329	www.pbhfoundation.org
Progressive Marketing Group	66-67	323-890-8100	www.pmgstrategic.net
Record Buck Farms	Floral-16	561-537-8586	
Ruma Fruit & Produce Co., Inc.	30	800-252-8282	www.rumasfiddleheads.com
Ben B. Schwartz & Sons, Inc.	34	313-841-8300	www.benbdetroit.com
Southern Specialties	143	954-784-6500	www.southernspecialties.com
Southern Specialties	66-67	954-784-6500	www.southernspecialties.com
Spice World, Inc.	26	800-433-4979	www.spiceworldinc.com
Stellar Distributing	94-95	416-236-9394	
Sun Dried Marketing Inc.	84-85	559-433-3777	www.greengiantfresh.com
Sun Valley Group	Floral-7	800-747-0396	
Tanimura & Antle, Inc.	21	800-772-4542	www.taproduce.com
Target Interstate Systems, Inc.	51	800-338-2743	www.targetinterstate.com
Turbana Banana Corp	120-121	800-TURBANA	www.turbana.com
United States Potato Board	110-111	303-369-7783	www.uspotatoes.com
United Fresh Produce Association	15	202-303-3400	www.unitedfresh.org/saladbars
United Fresh Produce Association	41	202-303-3400	www.unitedfresh.org
United Fresh Produce Association	132	202-303-3400	www.unitedfresh.org
The USA Bouquet Co.	Floral-3	786-437-6502	www.usabq.com
Village Farms	118-119	888-377-3213	www.villagefarms.com
Vision Import Group	98-99	201-968-1190	www.visionimportgroup.com

100 YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG

With the recent celebration of its 100th anniversary in San Antonio, TX, at its annual convention from February 20-24 , it is a fitting time to reflect on the National Watermelon Association and its promotion of one of America's favorite fresh produce treats. As the photo above illustrates, taken in 1939 at the New York World's Fair, watermelon has always been a popular family favorite.

It was even further back in time — March, 1914, in Atlanta, GA — when a group of watermelon growers and shippers had the courage to come together and create what was called back in those days, the Watermelon Growers & Distributors Association. After a couple of additional name changes over the years, today it is known as the National Watermelon Association — the country's oldest fruit and vegetable single commodity association.

While a great deal has changed during the past 100 years — growth, expansion, new varieties, consumption patterns, imports, exports, promotions and so much more — one thing that has been consistent year-in and year-out is the NWA's primary focus of helping its members sell more watermelons, assisting in all stages from production to consumption. "As the NWA embarks on its 100th year of service to its members, maybe it's the same as it was back when those courageous people had the foresight to create the association," imagines Robert Morrissey, executive director of the NWA. " I wonder what they would think about the NWA today? Something tells me they would be smiling, like we all do when we bite into a sweet, juicy slice."

The *Blast from the Past* is a regular feature of Produce Business. We welcome submissions of your old photos, labels or advertisements along with suggested captions. Please send materials to: Editor, Produce Business, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail info@producebusiness.com

THE NEW YORK PRODUCE SHOW AND CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE

DECEMBER 10-12, 2013

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

PH: 212-426-2218 • www.nyproduceshow.com

produce business

CELEBRATING FRESH

Your Expectations

We refresh your expectations by using our own refrigerated fleet and regional distribution centers.

That way, we get the freshest produce from our farms into your stores in continually monitored cold chain logistics. Del Monte offers:

- An exclusive, worldwide license to Controlled Ripening Technology (CRT®)
- 22 U.S. distribution centers and fresh-cut facilities providing inventory that arrives just-in-time nationwide
- A depth and breadth of inventory and resources across categories to support major promotional initiatives
- An extensive consumer database to assist in making fact-based decisions

www.freshdelmonte.com | 1.800.950.3683 | www.fruits.com